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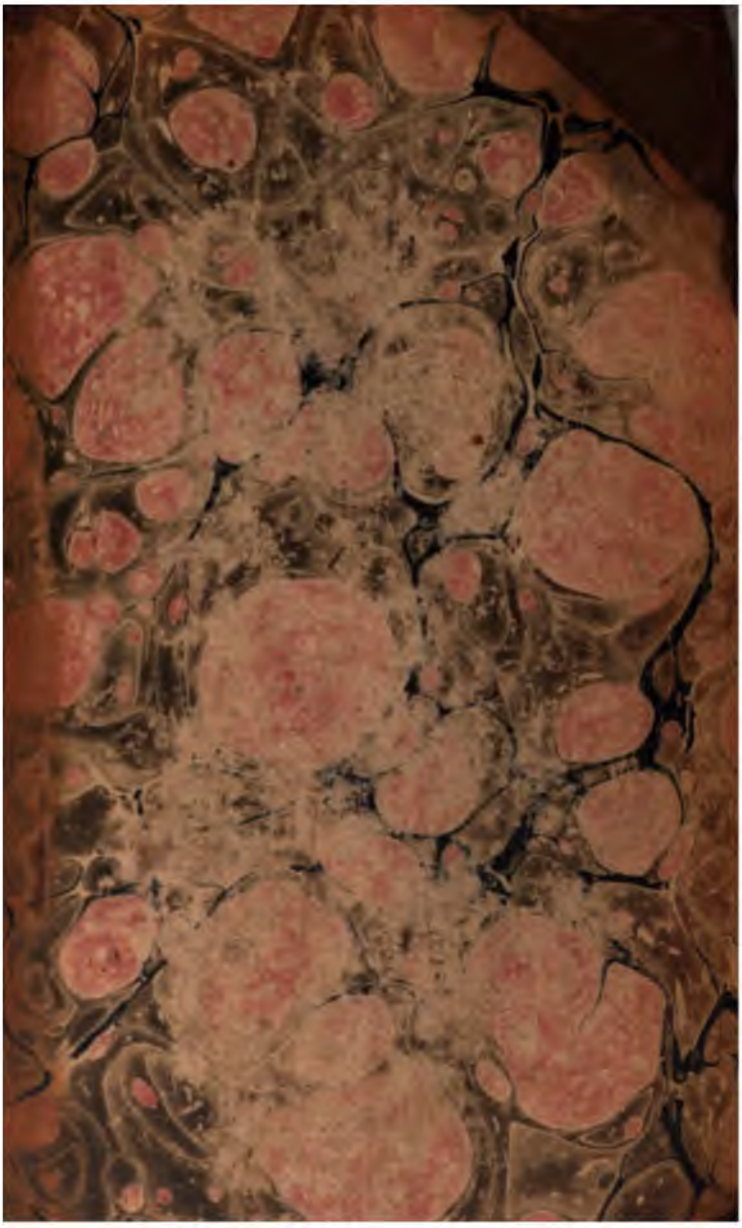

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L.A. 1829

THE CARBONARO.

A

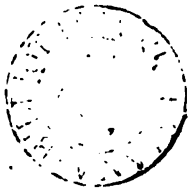
PIEDMONTESE TALE.

BY

THE DUKE DE LEVIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

161.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

PREFACE.

SOME seven years ago a strange adventure that took place in the canton of Evreuse, a little town about three leagues from Versailles, excited very general curiosity, and was noticed in the whole of the journals of the day. The affair to which we allude was the delivery of a female under circumstances of a very mysterious and tragical character; so much so, that, at the time, they formed the subject of every conversation. Of a couple of twins, one was said to have been murdered, without any plausible motive for the atrocity ever being attributed to the unknown perpetrator. Of the fact there could be no doubt: the midwife who attended

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PREFACE

SOME seven years ago a [illegible] took place in the canton of [illegible], a [illegible] about three leagues from Versailles, [illegible] general curiosity, and was noticed [illegible] the journals of the day. The [illegible] allude was the delivery of a [illegible] stances of a [illegible] so much [illegible] ject [illegible] when [illegible] strik- [illegible] nolacity; [illegible] dying; the [illegible] of trust. It

the unhappy mother made her declaration in a court of justice, and the court ordered an investigation; but whether it was wrong directed, or gone about in an improper way, or whether Fortune, as she sometimes does, favoured the criminals, certain it is that no one was arrested; and thus a veil, which seemed impenetrable, was cast over the crime.

But there is no secret that the lapse of time reveals not; and, thanks to a very singular concurrence of circumstances, we have now come to a perfect knowledge of the whole mystery, together with all its extraordinary details. They are interesting in more than one point of view. In the first place, the energetic and impassioned character of the persons who played the principal parts gives to these events a peculiarity which differs essentially from any thing that we are accustomed to see in our cold clime, where the regulated mannerism of society, and its monotony of habitudes, afford but a very limited play either for good or for bad qualities. And from these circumstances it also results, that the historian who paints even with ordinary fidelity a picture of nature thus am-

mated, and of scenes so lively and so striking, is almost certain of attracting the attention of the public, ever greedy of strong sensations. Our only motive, however, in giving publicity to the following recital of adventures is, that by such means we hope to make our countrymen better acquainted with an epoch which has been too slightly dwelt upon, although it was the most remarkable in every respect that succeeded the restoration. The year 1821 was a critical, we might say an alarming, period. Europe, but recently relieved from the most violent shocks, appeared as if ready to enter on a fresh career of revolution; Spain was in a state of insurrection, and threatened to snatch from her king the enjoyment of those rights for whose integrity she had courageously contended when he was in captivity; the CARBONARO was dominant in Naples and at Turin, where his affiliated brethren swarmed; and in the north, in Prussia, in Poland, and even in Russia, secret societies, whose objects were no longer limited to the seduction of a few university pupils, were zealously employed in an endeavour to shake the honesty of the guards of monarchy.

England, whose power and whose immense mass of wealth is every year augmenting, was not at that moment in a more peaceful condition than her neighbours, when the starving millions of her artisans were goaded to fury by the theories of the radicals. Even the ices of the north did not operate as an absolute check on the general effervescence. In the very centre of Scandinavia an ultra-liberal diet, we allude to the Storthing of Norway, made an attempt to abolish hereditary aristocracy, which was defended, strange to tell, by a king sprung from the lowest ranks of the people.

In the east, again, the Hetairists of the principalities, the Greeks of Attica and of the Morea, had by a bold and magnanimous effort shaken off the yoke which weighed on their shoulders; although there the fanatical mussulman opposed by his predestinative doggedness, which renders him inaccessible to the impressions of fear, to the enthusiasm inspired by the love of freedom, and the exaltation of mind which glorious recollections impart, an energy of resistance that, after seven years of carnage and of devastation on both sides, has left the issue of that bloody struggle still dubious.

In the meanwhile, and this is not the least singularity of so singular a period, he whom Europe had with difficulty contained, was expiating by long and painful suffering the faults of policy and crimes of ambition, of which he had been guilty, in a lonely and insignificant islet, in the midst of scenes far distant from those he had disturbed and distinguished. Struck down, yet still at the head of a formidable party, he sunk under an enemy whom victors and vanquished equally respect; and the dying throes of this modern Titan shook the civilised world to its base.

But France is the spot to which our cares principally extend. Is it possible to forget the condition of that country at the period in question—when parties were drawn up for the fight, and merely waited the signal to mingle in deadly strife; when royal authority tottered on its seat; when its dependants were more occupied with the thoughts of what *had been* than of what *was* owing to it; when the royalists were disunited, and their enemies striving each who should rival his fellow in audacity; when the ministry was weak; the king dying; the army rather an object of fear than of trust? If

the public peace was not actually attacked, at least the public security, that grand tie which connects the various parts of society, no longer existed. In a word, the general uneasiness that agitated all classes of the community could be fairly likened to nothing but that terrible anxiety that is felt by the natives of a country subject to volcanic eruptions when, after some dreadful convulsion of nature, followed by a few days of calm, they again perceive the earth heaving, and the mountains bellowing, and when no one can possibly tell whether these are the last effects of a fire that is dying out, or the terrible symptoms of a new conflagration.

The fatal presages were not indeed realised. The divinity which watches over our country dissipated with his powerful breath the storm that seemed accumulating above our heads; and yet, the more to mock the pride of human foresight, he educed a calm out of the midst of those tempests, and converted an element of discord into a means of safety. The war in the Peninsula, which the enemies of the Bourbons were the first to invoke, because they imagined that simple contact would mingle in one mass the revolutionary armies of the

two countries, dispersed the army of Spain, and made royalism the prevailing feature of the army of France.

These memorable events are recorded in our chronicles; but the events that led to them lie hidden in darkness, and will probably remain so for many a year. Indeed, the mass of memoirs and reminiscences, that desire of gain every day produces, so far from enlightening facts, do but shroud the truth in yet thicker darkness, while the lies and scandal they contain only serve to grieve morality and to make malignity smile. The spirit of party appears through all the envelopes and disguises that they assume; and their wish to circulate this or that opinion to excuse this or that personal fault, is every where so obvious, that it inspires a just distrust of all their statements, and makes those doubtful which are best verified.

The lack of impartiality in ocular witnesses, above all during times of trouble which strongly excite the passions, is an old malady in human nature. It has been with a view to provide against it that writers gifted with talents for observation as well as the power of enchaining attention, have not feared to

summon fiction to the assistance of virtue; and in bestowing on their descriptions a dramatic form, their readers not unfrequently find in the imaginary personages that they put forward on the stage a more strict resemblance to the realities of life than in the best drawn pictures of the historian. In order to appreciate the extent of the success thus attained, the mere announcement of which may appear paradoxical, we must remember previous to Corneille how few knew any thing of the heights to which Roman greatness could soar; and in the present day, has it not been said, and with reason, that there is more truth in one of the novels of Scott than in many histories?

When we reflect maturely on these facts, we cannot avoid coming to the conclusion, that the form of historic composition is almost a matter of indifference, and that the only thing of real importance is its sincerity. By sincerity, we of course mean the desire of making truth triumph, to the exclusion of all notions that are inexact, whether of things or persons; in a word, a firm resolution to give to every one what is fairly due, and no more. But in order to attain this highly

honourable end mere rectitude of intention is not sufficient, we must scrupulously watch against all those predilections which the prejudices of birth, the rank we occupy in society, and especially our community of interest with the parties described, are apt to inspire us even without our being conscious of it.

It is this virtue of sincerity, a negative one it may be said, but not the less rare on that account, for which, in defect of all others, we claim credit in the pages that we are about to submit to the public, and which form the first part of a history that we may at a future period complete.

There are certain documents still wanting to complete our work. We await their arrival from Greece: in which country, at Egina, after valiantly serving in the cause of liberty, the unfortunate young man who plays the principal character in the following history very lately terminated his chequered and unfortunate career.

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THE CARBONARO.

CHAPTER I.

THE midnight bell had tolled, the lights were extinguished, and the little town of Chevreuse was wrapped in sleep, when a domestic, whose accent spoke him a foreigner, was heard to knock repeatedly at the door of Dame Bontemps, the midwife, whose aid he had come to solicit for a female that was then in labour, about two leagues from the village. Old Bontemps, the husband of the *accoucheuse*,

pushed up the window of the second floor where he lodged—

"The night is chilly and dark," said he; "my dame has a cold; go to the doctor, at the corner of the square opposite the church."

"He is not at home," answered the voice; "and, besides, it is Dame Bontemps in whom alone we repose confidence. Bid her get up: her labour will be amply rewarded. If she require twenty francs in advance, I have orders to give them to her."

"I shall open the door immediately," said old Bontemps. Whilst the messenger was being admitted, and was taking some hasty refreshment, after depositing a napoleon on the chimney-piece of the parlour, the good dame dressed herself for a journey; and, anticipating a troublesome labour, she took down the green bag that held her professional implements, and

wrapping herself up in her good man's cloak, set out with her guide.

When they had gone on for a hundred yards, they found at the turn of a little street a covered car, the horse of which was tied to the bars of a window.

"Get in," said the man, "it is my master's market-cart, which he sent, lest you should be fatigued."

Dame Bontemps placed herself in the seat of the car accordingly. When they were about a musket-shot away from the town, the messenger drew hastily a handkerchief from his pocket, and addressing Dame Bontemps, said roughly,—"I have orders to blindfold you: do not attempt to resist; it is quite useless."

Dame Bontemps lacked neither courage nor wit, but she was alone; it was night, and she

was at the will of a powerful man. To yield was, therefore, a matter of necessity, and she submitted. Such extraordinary precautions, she thought, betokened nothing good, but she affected to treat them lightly.

"If you will have a game of blindman's-buff," said she, "good: but it is a useless precaution, for we sort of folks tell no tales; and, besides, 'tis so dark, that one can hardly see with their eyes open."

"It matters not," said the guide, binding the handkerchief firmly round her head, "it is my orders." After a minute or two of silence, he added,—"You have no cause for alarm, Dame Bontemps, my master is generous, and you will be well paid; but he is a devil of a fellow, and will be obeyed, let him order what he will. His anger is terrible, and no one ever withstood it with impunity."

During this conversation, which was but little calculated to give her confidence, the good dame perceived, by the jolting of the car, that they had quitted the high way to Versailles, and betaken them to some cross-road; and she was aware, from the rubbing of the branches on the top of the vehicle, that they were traversing a wood. At length they stopped; and the barking of a couple of dogs told that they were close to some country-seat, or farm-house. The driver alighted, pushed up the great gate which he had left ajar when he set out, and drove forward the car into a large yard. He then assisted Dame Bontemps to alight from the car, but without allowing the *bandeau* to be removed from her eyes, until she was fairly in the inside of the building. The room into which she was thus introduced was a sort of barn, with an arched roof, one half of it filled

with wheat in the sheaf. At the end of the empty portion, and behind a garden mat, stood a stump-bed—a couch for misery to stretch itself on—on which lay a young female, whose long dishevelled tresses trailed on the floor, and who was so worn out and exhausted with distress of every kind, that she had no longer strength to complain, but only spoke her anguish in low groans. A few rude seats, a table of walnut-tree very much the worse for wear, a sorry pallet that leaned against one of the pillars which supported the gothic roof, composed the whole furniture of a place that up to that time no human being had ever inhabited. The flickering light of a lamp, placed on a pedestal from which the statue had fallen, dimly lighted up the scene of desolation. Near the bed, upon a low stool, a man was seated, whose features were half concealed by the broad brim of a

hat that was pulled over his eyes, and whose stature and garments were hidden by the folds of a Spanish cloak, in which he was enveloped. When the midwife entered, he arose and said, with a severe tone, "You have been long in coming; if you had arrived sooner, you might perhaps have saved the life of this infant that has just come into the world, and which is now dead." While speaking thus, he showed her a new-born babe, that lay stretched out at his feet on a heap of linen.

Dame Bontemps approached, in order to consider it more narrowly; and stooping down, "It gives no signs of life," said she, "yet we may try—"

"I tell you," interrupted the unknown, "that it is dead."

There was in the tones of the man, in his looks, and in the gesture with which his words

were accompanied, something imperious and sinistrous, that made Dame Bontemps shiver with terror.

" In good truth," answered she hastily and fearfully—an answer which she afterwards regretted—" it gives no signs of life."

" You hear, madam," said the unknown, addressing the unhappy mother, " the midwife declares that the child is dead." He immediately stooped down, wrapped up the infant in a cloth, and, after saying a few words in a strange tongue, handed the body to the servant, and then walked out along with him.

Dame Bontemps, now left alone with the travailing woman, approached the bed, in order to render her such services as her case required. She had no sooner done so, than she was aware of a second infant that was about to be brought forth; and scarcely was it born, when the effort

of nature that accompanied its birth restored the use of her senses to the mother, of which she had to that moment remained apparently deprived. She opened her eyes, and, meeting the compassionate glance of the midwife, with a tone of despair addressed her—

"For Heaven's sake, take pity on this unhappy infant! save this one at least, I conjure you, if Heaven permit it; the good deed will not go unrewarded."

Dame Bontemps, who was as kind as she was courageous, promised to do all that was in her power, but, at the first blush, no expedient presented itself to her mind. So pressing a necessity, however, soon set her wits to work; and on a sudden, and as if by inspiration, she bethought her of the bag that contained her instruments. She immediately drew them out, and concealed them at the end of the barn

between two sheaves of corn: she then took the child from its mother, who gave it to her with her blessing. "Dear little one," said she, "may that God, in whom I trust, preserve to thee the life which he has given!" Dame Bontemps speedily wrapped up her charge in her apron, and stowed it in the best way she could in the bag, in which she was careful to leave an opening for its breathing.

"Trust to me," said she, in a tone which gave consolation to the heart of its mother; "I will no more abandon it, than if it were my own son; but if it cry, we are undone!"

In a short time the dreaded moment arrived; the scowling-looking stranger returned. Collecting all the courage she could, Dame Bontemps, with an air of calmness, said—

"My presence here is no longer necessary; the women of the house can render the lady

any ordinary services, and there has been no accident in the case. For my part, I am impatiently expected at Chevreusè: will you reconduct me thither?"

"That is but just. Take these forty francs, and set out; don't attempt to pierce into my secret; 'tis as much as your head is worth."

The midwife took the money, thanked the giver, and went a step or two towards the door, then hastily returned to take her bag, which she feigned to have forgotten, squeezed affectionately the hand of her patient, under the pretence of feeling her pulse, and bidding her be of good cheer, departed. The car was ready to receive her; and scarcely had she taken her place, when the servant again tied the handkerchief round her head; a precaution that was indeed more excusable than before, as the day was now about to break. When

they set out, Dame Bontemps thought she could perceive that, in quitting the house, they did not take the same road that they had in coming to it; and she was strengthened in this opinion from feeling, by the motion of the car, that they were descending a steep hill, which must have retarded the pace of the horse, if they had had to climb it, in their previous drive. She could perceive also, from the rustling of the dry leaves in the wind, that they were travelling in a wood. The desire of discovering some clue to the case of the unhappy woman, whom she had just left in so lamentable a condition, forcibly directed her attention to these particulars; and she was endeavouring to imprint on her memory whatever might assist her in her ulterior researches, when a report of a gun fired at a short distance made her start in alarm.

"'Tis robbers," said she in a subdued voice, and pressing close to her driver.

"It is some poachers rather," replied he; "but we are now at our journey's end; get down, and, on your life, stir not from this spot for a quarter of an hour hence." So saying, he placed her at the foot of an oak; and having done so, turned his horse's head, and drove rapidly off.

The first care of the midwife was to open the bag, in which she found with joy the infant living and breathing, but extremely weak. While she was warming it in her bosom, a hound pushed through the brushwood, and halting some ten paces from her, began to bark: the noise speedily brought forward its master, who, imagining that he had lighted on a poacher, exclaimed, "Give up your arms, you thief, or I'll blow your brains out!"

"Don't fire!" cried the frightened dame in her turn, "I am a woman."

"Ah, that alters the case," said the game-keeper with a softened voice; "but what are you doing here at this untimely hour?—cutting wood, I suppose, or plundering the warren. The duke does not do enough for the poor, mayhap, they must rob him too! These rascally peasants, 'tis always their way, the more you favour 'em—"

"You are wrong now, Lafrance," said Dame Bontemps, who, from his voice, recognised in the man a keeper whose wife she had delivered, at Chevreuse, the preceding year: "I have lost my way; you must assist me in finding it again. Are we far from the town?"

"Ah! what! it is you, Dame Bontemps! You are a good half league from home; but tell us by what mishap are you here?"

"I shall tell you that some other day. I have a baby here that requires succour. Guide me out of the wood."

"Most cheerfully: you midwife folks, you are always in a mystery; but come, lean on my arm, you appear fatigued." In a short time they reached the road from Dampierre to Chevreuse, that runs along the river Yvette: the morning was now getting light, and they met some country people going to market. Them Dame Bontemps joined; and the keeper, perceiving that she had no more need of him, quitted her, in order to finish his rounds.

CHAPTER II.

It was about six o'clock in the morning when Dame Bontemps got back to Chevreuse. Her husband, who perceived that she was overcome with fatigue, and extremely agitated, was anxious to learn the cause of her uneasiness, but she was not in a condition to satisfy him : after a few minutes' rest, however, she recovered, and narrated to him, in all their details, the events of the night.

Bontemps was one of those characters which

are but too rife in the world. His natural disposition was not bad; and his first thoughts generally inclined him to the side of generosity: but his cupidity never failed to gain the mastery; and, when his interest and his benevolence were unhappily opposed to each other, the struggle was seldom a long one. On the occasion in question, he pitied very sincerely the fate of the unfortunate mother and outcast child; but, in a short time, the dread of the expense cooled these kindly sentiments; and he asked, with an air of embarrassment, what Dame Bontemps meant to do with the latter.

"I am determined to take care of it, as if it were my own:—have I not promised as much?"

"But did you consider well the difficulties that this may bring us into? Who is to pay for the nurse? Not a parcel of unknown persons, that you will never see in your days again.

You have left your instruments behind, too; and they are worth almost as much as all the money you have got. Come, if you will follow my advice, send the child to the Foundling. You have risked your life to save his; is not that enough? As to the circumstances attending his birth, the most prudent way is to say nothing about them."

"I will not follow your advice," replied the midwife in a firm tone. "In the first place, humanity cries out against it. Ought I not to try, in conscience, to rescue this unhappy woman from the hands of her oppressor? And how can I do that if I do not make known to the officers of justice what I have seen? Besides, I should compromise my own safety. Suppose me, for a moment, to be silly enough to hold my tongue; is it not obvious that, were it discovered that I had a knowledge of this

crime (and nothing can be concealed for ever), it would be a just ground of reproach against me? Yes, the very least that could happen, in that case, would be the loss of my certificate." This last consideration affected Bontemps more sensibly than the moral part of his wife's argument. He was a lazy subject, and carried on, after a very indifferent fashion, a small trade, whose profits were next to nothing. It was his wife, by her activity and intelligence and practice, which extended over the whole of the district, that furnished means for the support of their household. Alarmed, therefore, at the bare idea of her business being interdicted, he not only no longer persisted in his first advice, but he even proposed to go along with her to the judge's house, for the purpose of lodging an information.

M. Dupuy, the district magistrate of Che-

vreuse, owed his place to the influence of the deceased Duke of Luynes, whose attorney he had been at the time when lords of the manor enjoyed, on their own lands, the privilege of judging both in great and small causes. Honest, and even disinterested, he was yet accused of harshness in his manners and severity in his judgments. Distrustful and suspicious from his natural disposition, the crimes of the Revolution, of which he had narrowly escaped being the victim, had soured his temper. In his eyes all men were rogues; and, when a crime was committed in his district, he hunted out the authors of it with an activity in which passion too largely mingled. In a word, if it must be said, he felt a secret pleasure in punishing culprits; a race which, according to him, with a very few exceptions, filled the whole of the world. It was easy to perceive that it was not

without repugnance he submitted to the new institutions; that he sincerely regretted the ancient regime, and more especially the judiciary part of it. He would cheerfully uncover, while but mentioning the parliament of Paris; but as for juries, they were his abhorrence. To finish his picture, his talents were small, and his knowledge limited.

M. Dupuy listened to the recital of Dame Bontemps with the most lively attention. "This is a terrible business," said he: "first, murder presumptive of the infant, and that is not the whole of it; there is every reason to believe that the female had been run away with; and thence came rape, murder, God knows what! One thing is evident, the wretch has accomplices; there is the servant that drove the car—but what say I? the whole house must be

a rendezvous of robbers. We must seize every soul of them. Ho ! call the lieutenant of the police; his whole party will not be too many for our purpose."

"But," said Dame Bontemps, "how are we to go about finding them out?"

The magistrate, hurried on by the zeal with which he entered on all judicial investigations, had not yet asked himself this very simple question; and it appeared to pose him. After a moment's hesitation, however, he answered, "Dame, you shall be our guide."

"I! you forget, M. Dupuy, that my eyes were blinded all the time of the ride. I was not allowed to look up, until I got to the wood of Dampierre, where I met with the keeper of the château."

"No matter! Those who bring a charge

must furnish the means of prosecuting it to conviction; if they do not, I must tell you they will be liable to suspicion themselves."

"My duty was to tell all I knew, and I have fulfilled it; it is the business of the police to make the necessary search; with that I have no concern."

"You are a party to the process, and I shall keep you to it."

"All that I can do is to identify the criminals when they are confronted with me; and assuredly I shall do so, without allowing myself to be brow-beaten."

At this point the arrival of the lieutenant of police suspended the dispute, which was beginning to be a warm one. M. de Sainville was a retired officer of the army of Condé, a man of pure honour, of extreme delicacy, and of unquestioned bravery. To these qualities he

joined an intellect remarkable at once for subtlety and solidity. Ever on horseback, and as well acquainted with the surface of the country as an habitual hunter (hunting had indeed been the passion of his youth), he was the protector of the weak, and the terror of the robber. M. Dupuy prized his talents and revered his probity; and, in every matter of difficulty, he sought his counsel, and relied upon it.

As soon as the lieutenant appeared, "You are come quite opportunely, M. de Sainville," said he to him, "to prevail on Dame Bontemps to conduct us to a spot where she witnessed the perpetration of some most criminal acts. They are no less delicts than murder and ravishment that we are discussing."

"I would with all my heart," interrupted the midwife briskly, "if it were in my power;

but how can I know any thing of roads over which I travelled blindfold?"

The lieutenant observed, that this difficulty, though great, was not insurmountable, and, that by collecting all the marks, and attending to the different circumstances, and, lastly, by calculating the time spent in the journey, they might succeed, if not in supplying that information which Dame Bontemps could not give, at least in greatly facilitating the measures that justice might require.

"Well, well, then," cried the judge, "put the questions yourself: as for me, I have been too long from school."

Sainville at first declined the task, but at last he yielded. The questions and answers, of which a note was taken, were as follow:

"At what hour did you set out from Chevreuse?"

"It might be half-past twelve, perhaps a little more."

"How did you leave the town?"

"By the gate that leads to Versailles."

"Did the car that conveyed you go at a quick pace?"

"The horse trotted while on the high-road, but, when he came to the cross-road, he walked."

"How long were you on the high-road?"

"About half an hour."

"To which hand did you turn when you quitted it?"

"I think I am certain that we turned to the left."

"At what o'clock did you arrive at the farm?"

"That I cannot possibly tell."

"You recollect, at least, how long you remained there?"

"Nearly an hour—perhaps a little less."

"And how long were you in returning?"

"I think it must have been about three quarters of an hour from the time I left the house, until I fell in with the keeper. I came back with him but slowly, because I was fatigued. We were a good hour on the road."

"And you got home when?"

"At half-past five o'clock."

"You were absent then altogether five hours, during one of which you rested. There remain two to go and two to come back; now you went better than half of the way at a walking pace, or on foot, and, unquestionably, you did not go straight forward; hence I conclude that the place to which you were conveyed was not more than two leagues distant in a straight line. Now tell me, do you think you passed through any villages in your route?"

"I do not believe I did; for the dogs would have barked as they did at the farm."

"Can you describe to us the building into which you were received?"

"I have already told M. Dupuy that it was a barn; but there was this peculiarity in it, that one could not see the tiles; the roof was arched in the old fashion, like the choir of our church of Chevreuse."

The officer of police was about to continue his interrogation, when the magistrate, rising up suddenly, drew him aside into an adjoining room, telling Dame Bontemps, drily, to wait the while. When he was alone with the lieutenant, he began to communicate his suspicions.

"Don't you perceive," said he, "that this midnight journey, this bandage over her eyes, and all the rest of the romantic circumstances, are mere fables, invented for the purpose of

putting justice on a false scent? I could bet that this mysterious childbirth took place in the town of Chevreuse; and that it is from a hope of screening the criminals, who are perhaps her acquaintances, or who have paid her highly, that this midwife gives us indications that will lead to no discovery. But I won't allow a magistrate like myself to be sported with in such a fashion. I am determined to send her to the king's *procureur*, who will, unquestionably, imprison her until she tell the truth, and until the whole business be cleared up."

Sainville replied, that he did not agree in opinion with the magistrate, and that the responses of Dame Bontemps appeared to him stamped with the impression of truth. "Besides," he added, "she is a respectable woman, and generally esteemed. I shall not say that, in order to cover the failing of an imprudent

girl, she might not stretch a point; but to fabricate crimes such as these, or to turn aside justice from the guilty, I cannot believe her capable of that. I know some particulars in her character that repel such an imputation."

"All these may be mere hypocrisy; and one thing is certain—the description of the barn, where she lays the scene of this adventure, has the elements of falsehood in it. The gothic vault can only apply to some old church. Now it is a fact, that in all the district of Chevreuse not a single edifice consecrated to religious worship was ever sold at a revolutionary sale: this the director of the domains of Versailles told me but the other day. There is proof positive."

The lieutenant was paying less attention to the termination of this discourse than to a large map of the department of the Seine and Oise

that hung suspended against the wall over the chimney. Instead of replying to it, he pulled from a pocket-book, which he never went without, a small pair of silver compasses and a black-lead pencil, with which he traced lightly on the map a square, whose base on the south followed the course of the Yvette from Chevreuse as far as Dampierre. The Versailles road, for the length of two leagues, formed the east side of the square; the north side, which was parallel to the river, extended the same distance in the direction of Megnil; and the remaining side, passing through the wood of Levy, joined the base at the spot where Dame Bontemps had stated that she met the keeper.

"It is within this small square," said Sainville, "that we are to find the spot indicated: if I find it not there, I shall think as you do, that the information lodged is an imposition."

After two or three moments of attentive examination, he suddenly exclaimed—" I have it; I know the very place where these matters took place; it was at ' Our Lady of the Rock.' It is a lonely farm, or barn rather:—yes, just here, under the point of my compasses. The duration of the journey, the direction, all the information we have received, correspond exactly to the indications: and, what will surprise you a good deal, the gothic architecture which awakened your suspicions, is, on the contrary, proof incontestable of the midwife's veracity. Last year, while passing by chance that way, I had the curiosity to examine in what condition the church of the old monastery, which was suppressed long before the revolution, might be, and I then learned that it was used as a barn."

" Victory!" replied M. Dupuy, overjoyed

at discovering the clue to the brigands, which he thought absolutely lost; "you are right to a very T. I cannot conceive how it did not occur to my recollection, for I know 'Our Lady of the Rock' well; and I have seen before now the tombs of the old chevaliers with the three chevrons that are there."

With these words he hurried out to Dame Bontemps, and addressing her in a low tone, which he endeavoured to render severe, he said—

"You persist then in your refusal? you will not act as our guide?"

"You ask impossibilities of me."

"Well, well, we can dispense with your assistance. The spot to which you were conducted is known."

"Who found it out?"

"You must know, Dame Bontemps," said

the judge, with an air of importance, " that Justice has sharp eyes as well as long arms. To me the slightest indications are sufficient to enable me to discover secrets the most profoundly hidden. But it is to no purpose that I render important services to society, no one thanks me for them ; while places of judges and of counsellor-auditors are thrown away upon people who are not fit to put the seals to their own patents. Interest and intrigue, Dame Bontemps—interest and intrigue are now, as they have always been, the only means of getting on in the world."

During this diatribe, which was pronounced with an emphasis that completed the absurdity of it—for poor M. Dupuy, the district judge of Chevreuse, occupied the only situation to which he had the slightest pretensions—the lieutenant addressed his officer, and ordered

him to send him a couple of gendarmes disguised. Even while writing the order, he could not help smiling at the praises, so slenderly merited, that M. Dupuy gave to himself for his pretended sagacity. He might, without impropriety, have repressed a display of vanity that savoured of impudence; but he thought, and justly, that it was best to be indulgent, and to use gentle language, when treating a weakness so very general, that no man, when he makes a sincere return of his own character, can declare himself wholly exempt from its influence. In the mean time, the magistrate dismissed Dame Bontemps, telling her to return next morning, at five o'clock, in order to accompany him to the ancient abbey of "Our Lady of the Rock." "I shall take my clerk with me," said he, "for we must draw up a state of the case; and, by squeezing close,

we shall all find room in my cabriolet. As to the lieutenant, he will escort us on horseback; and undoubtedly he will take such measures as may ensure a complete capture of the rogues. Not a man must escape from justice."

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning, at break of day, Dame Bontemps, punctual to her appointment, appeared at the mansion of the judge. The clerk, a little short fat man, had got thither before her; and M. Dupuy, having mounted the two in the cabriolet, the seat of which they filled, placed himself in the middle, resting rather on the knees of his fellow-travellers than on the cushion of the vehicle. The lieu-

tenant had set out before, and waited for the party in the outskirts of the town. It was at first arranged that they should follow the road to Versailles, that they might turn off to the left where the car had turned; but on a little reflection they determined, as there remained no doubt about the identity of the place where the examination was to take place, that it would be much the best plan to go thither directly. Following this new arrangement, the judge and his fellow-travellers drove along the bank of the Yvette, until they got beyond the great park of Dampierre; and leaving on the right the road that leads to *Voisin-le-Bretonneux*, they gained by a bridle road the wood of Levy. Previous to entering the wood, the ruins of the *château* that bears the same name were seen in the distance towards the south-east, and M. Dupuy could not let slip so

excellent an opportunity of making a display of his local knowledge.

"You see," he began, "those towers and walls, now half in ruins? That old manor-house, some six hundred years ago, was the baronial residence of the lords of this wealthy valley, and their lands extended as far as the domains of the famous Simon de Montfort. Guy de Levis, who had married De Montfort's daughter, went the crusade against the Albigenses with him; but before he set out, he was anxious, from a regard to his native province, to found a monastery that might serve as a burying-place for the knights of his family. His intentions were religiously fulfilled by his descendants; and during many generations their dead were carried from the heart of Languedoc to 'Our Lady of the Rock:' we shall soon see the shapeless remains of their tombs, which the

Marquis de Levis got repaired but a short time before the revolution."

"What!" said the wondering clerk, "are we going to 'Our Lady of the Rock,' then! that ancient church, where all the country, for thirty leagues round about, went as pilgrims?"

"Yes, it was there that Dame Bontemps was conducted the night before last; and it was there that she witnessed matters which now call for most serious attention on the part of the magistrate."—"That spot," said the clerk, with an air of importance which he but rarely assumed, "is, it appears, destined to be the theatre of the strangest scenes!—I shall tell your worship what I saw there during the reign of terror. You were not at that time at Chevreuse; the rascals had you in the prison then, to which you now-a-days are in the habit of sending others; and as to you, Dame Bon-

temps, you were but a very little body. I was then a member of the district guard, and so I was under the orders of the revolutionary committee that governed Chevreuse. Now it happened that one Gracchus Dubois thought fit to denounce 'Our good Lady of the Rock' as an aristocrat, for taking upon her, he said, to work miracles, without permission from the constituted authorities. The president immediately made the patriotic motion to cast down an image which insulted the faithful citizens in such a way; and a decree was passed conformable to his wishes. Gracchus was ordered to execute the decree, along with other two members of committee; and he got as escort a detachment of the armed force, of which I was one. When we got to the abbey, our chief ordered the door to be broken open, although no one dreamed of refusing us access, and

placing himself in front of the good virgin, he addressed her in these words—'Look there, citizens! mark that bit of stone, to which the imbecile enemies of the constitution attribute supernatural powers! In the name of the law, let it fall this instant under the sledge-hammer of reason!' The order was no sooner given, than it was obeyed. One fellow got a lever, with which he made the statue shake on its base; another, climbing upon the altar, cast a rope with a slip knot round the neck; and the fanatical Gracchus, seizing the end of it, pulled it with such force, and so little precaution, that the statue was loosened from its lofty pedestal, and tumbling on him from the whole of the height, struck him down stark dead. The fall of so ponderous a mass shook the whole of the old fabric; the vaulted roof was rent with a terrible crash; and a knight that knelt on one of the

tombs, rolling down to the foot of the altar, was shivered in a thousand pieces. We all ran out, in the full persuasion that the patrons and founders, or rather, that the great devil himself was at our heels. No one looked behind him, much less did any one think about picking up the president. We got back to Chevreuse in great consternation; but scarcely was the circumstance known there, when we received from the revolutionary committee strict injunctions that no one should mention it on pain of death."*

The clerk had just finished this strange tale, the particulars of which were known to but few persons in Chevreuse, when the old horse that drew the cabriolet stopped, discouraged by the appearance of the steep bank up which he had to

* An event similar to the one here recorded is said to have actually happened in 1794.—*Note of the French editor.*

travel. A smack with the whip sent him forward but a few steps, so his master thought it best to dismount; and his fellow-travellers, who were squeezed by the narrow vehicle, immediately followed his example. From the happy air of the trio, one would have said they had met with some fortunate adventure, yet the pleasure they testified was merely that of stretching their limbs at freedom. Alas! who has had so slender an experience of human life, as not to know that almost all the pleasures of this world arise out of the momentary cessation of physical pain, or the suspension of mental uneasiness?

When they had got to the top of the hill, and were within sight of the old wall that served as an enclosure to the buildings of "Our Lady of the Rock," the lieutenant went forward, in order to take such measures as were re-

quired, without giving offence to the inmates of the mansion. The judge, followed by his clerk and Dame Bontemps, entered the outer yard, the gate of which stood open, and from which a hay-cart was about to be driven by Bourgeois the farmer in person. Farmer Bourgeois had sufficient knowledge of his profession to know the good wool from the bad in his mongrel flock: he could also tell perennial sainfoin from annual; and, moreover, after divers years of hesitation, he had prevailed on himself to lay out a part of his lands in artificial grasses; and having found the benefit of this process, he contemplated getting rid by degrees of all the meadow on his farm. Wholly occupied in agricultural pursuits, and but rarely quitting his home, unless to go to market, he had the good sense to trouble his head but little in political matters. He was very well to live,

but he had not sufficient riches to make him cry up equality and hate the nobility, as the wealthy farmers his neighbours did. His countenance was vulgar, his presence heavy and clownish; he had never been in the ranks, as he had found means of evading the conscription by pretending disease, which cost him less than paying for a substitute. Speaking of him in a moral point of view, he was honest after the fashion of the world; that is, he did not refine overmuch in his notions of probity. He would not have taken a crown from his neighbour's purse, but if the crown happened to drop into his own, it was like to remain there. Farmer Bourgeois had been married for about ten years to a little dark-complexioned and somewhat swarthy dame, whose lively black eyes spoke a language which her manners did not belie. Active and intelligent, Madame

Bourgeois conducted her household and governed her husband with unlimited sway; she possessed, indeed, over the latter the superiority which a higher intellect and a more decisive character render easy of acquisition and of preservation in any connexion whatever. Her husband's affairs prospered in her hands; and she was sufficiently respected in the district, although such of the neighbours as had dealings with her complained that she was sharp even to injustice, or, as they expressed it in their country way, "she wished to take twice tithe of one farrow." They were compelled at the same time to confess, that if she loved her purse rather better than her neighbour, she was by no means without kindly feelings. It was admitted that she took a pleasure in conferring an obligation, provided it cost her nothing; and if, in rendering a ser-

vice, she saw the slightest chance of, at the same time, realising a decent profit, there was no bounds to her zeal. A carter, and a girl to look over the poultry, were all her attendants. The shepherd and his wife lived in a separate building, which in the times of the monks had served as a press-house.

The judge, who wished to use a little dissimulation, told the farmer, that as he was proceeding to *Mesnil St. Denis*, a village that bordered on the lands of "Our Lady of the Rock," for the purpose of sealing some instruments, he had found himself slightly unwell, and he was desirous to rest a few minutes. Bourgeois courteously begged the judge to walk into the house where he would find his wife, and calling to his carter, he bid him look after M. Dupuy's horse.

During this brief conversation, the clerk,

who along with Dame Bontemps had fallen a little behind, was regarding with attention the old church, now transformed into a barn: the outside was, with a very few alterations for the worse, in precisely the same condition as he had beheld it thirty years before. "I am as much at home here," said he to the midwife, "as if I had visited the place but yesterday. Do you see those broken panes at the top of that gothic window with some traces of armorial-bearings beneath them? That was the effect of a volley of musketry which we fired off on our arrival to show our hatred of the aristocrats; but, egad, when we went away we were not so courageous. I should like much to know in what state the inside is now. Let us go in and see." In vain, however, did he try the door; it was fast shut. They proceeded, in consequence, to join the

judge, whom they found in the kitchen chatting with Bourgeois, while his wife had gone down to the cellar to fetch some wine for her guest. When she came up, she looked with some surprise towards the strangers. "It is Bonfils, my clerk," said M. Dupuy; "and this is Madame Bontemps, the midwife of Chevreuse; you cannot but be acquainted with her."

He looked fixedly, while pronouncing these last words, at the farmer's wife; but, to his great surprise, she exhibited no signs of emotion. M. Dupuy began to lose all patience at this, and turning to Bourgeois, he said in a magisterial tone—

"Have you no declaration to make to justice in respect to what passed the other night in your dwelling? It was your duty to anticipate my visit, and that of the police."

This unexpected question confounded the

farmer, and made his wife tremble. On hearing the police mentioned, her cheeks were covered with a sudden flush; but perceiving her husband about to speak, and dreading that he might commit some indiscretion, she subdued her emotion, and said hastily, and with an air of embarrassment which she strove to conceal—

"What can any one have told your worship about us? Nothing ill, I hope. We possess, both of us, a reputation without blemish throughout the district; and if we should require sureties, we could get them even on the bench at Versailles, where my husband has a second cousin."

"We have nothing to say to that just now," said M. Dupuy drily; "characters and sureties make nothing against facts. Answer categorically to my questions, and without being confused. Bonfils, take down the answers."

"How came you to send, the night before last, for Dame Bontemps here; and what has become of the young female that she delivered?"

"I, your worship! I protest to you, before the God of truth, that now listens to us, I neither sent for this person nor for any other. This is the first time of my life that I ever set eyes on her: she is here, and she can declare it. Look me full in the face, ma'am; dare you maintain that you know me?"

The farmer's wife put this query with a sharpness that bordered on anger; for she sought to display the appearance of indignation that calumny naturally excites.

"Well, then, speak, Dame Bontemps," replied the judge testily, for he was at a loss how to explain such a positive denial; "do you persist in your declaration?"

"It is quite true," replied the midwife, "that I never saw this lady, nor am I any more acquainted with this apartment than with her. I never entered it: the circumstances that I witnessed passed in a barn."

"See now how she equivocates!" said the farmer's wife, interrupting her in a hasty and perturbed manner; "after declaring that she knew me, she attempts to shift about and tell us, God only knows what, about some barn! It is a shame! You see, gentlemen, this is nothing but a parcel of lies, invented to put honest people to trouble."

"I accuse you not," replied Dame Bontemps, with an air of dignity (for the dignity that accompanies innocence is peculiar to no rank in life); "but what I have said, and I should repeat it were death staring me in the face, is this, that I delivered, the night before last, an

unhappy female, who seemed to be in the power of a man, from whom she sought to save her infant in confiding it to me. I affirm, moreover, that it was in a barn, which every circumstance induces me to believe was connected with the house where we now are."

These last words produced a marked effect on Madame Bourgeois; an expression of joy sparkled in her eyes, as she said with a lively tone, and as if excited by some sudden thought—

"Well, your worship, since this woman pretends that she has been in some barn or other, I request that you will visit ours; and, if you find neither mother nor child there, I insist that you search the dwelling throughout, from the cellar to the garret. But let us begin with the said barn."

In finishing these words she took up a bunch of keys, and, followed by the whole party, she

opened the door of the ancient church. Sheaves of wheat occupied the farther end of the edifice, and seemed as if they had been heaped up there for a long time. There was nothing that indicated the place to have been at any period inhabited.

"Look here," said the clerk to the magistrate,—"here are the stones yet that served as a pedestal for the statue of the virgin; the fracture formed by the lever, that was used to overturn it, is still visible!"

"I also," added Dame Bontemps, "recognise this barn perfectly as the one to which I was brought. There is the pointed roof, and there are the carved pillars; the lamp stood on this ancient altar, and the couch was placed before it. I said, but a moment ago, that I could not affirm that I had ever been here; but now," added she in a raised voice, and assuming

a solemn tone, " I am ready to swear that I have: for it is impossible that there should be in the neighbourhood another place in all points so similar."

" Most assuredly," answered the lieutenant, who had just arrived, " there is not. There is no other church or chapel in the whole district in which divine service is not performed."

The unexpected appearance of the officer, accompanied by a couple of gendarmes, startled and confused the farmer's wife; but she soon recovered herself, and endeavouring to turn the matter off by an air of confidence, she deliberately proposed to M. de Sainville to conduct him through the house.

" Perhaps," said she with an ironical air, " we may, before we have done, discover Madame Bontemps' lying-in lady; in her

condition she would hardly take post and run away."

M. Dupuy, hesitating and irresolute, perceived with great chagrin that he was stopped short in the midst of his pursuit by the dishonesty of one of the women before him, and he knew not on which to let his wrath light—now suspecting the one and now the other: the lieutenant did not partake of his doubts. He did not find in the farmer's wife that air of truth and candour which had made him credit so readily the story of Dame Bontemps, and he was anxious for an opportunity of exposing her trickery. The habit of searching out the guilty who have such a strong interest in eluding the grasp of justice, the necessity of holding fast by the thread of truth through all the turns of the labyrinth, in which every art is used to bewilder them, naturally sharpen the wits of the agents

of all ranks who are appointed to watch over the public safety. It is not too much to assert, that this kind of chase sharpens even their external senses. It is with them as with professional huntsmen, who can tell from a slight trace hardly visible on the sand; from the branch of a tree whose leaves are a little rubbed; in a word, from marks that are invisible to others, the age, the height, and the strength of the animals that they are pursuing, as well as the route they have taken. The lieutenant was extremely able in the art of investigation; and he could seize with marvellous sagacity indications leading to conviction in circumstances which appeared altogether trivial.

As they left the barn, he noticed in the wet soil the yet fresh traces of two wheels that had passed by the side of the building.

"It is not long," said he carelessly to Bour-

geois, "since you were taking some fodder out of the barn."

"Not a truss has gone out of it," replied the latter, "for these three months, and more."

"Whence came these wheel-ruts then? They seem as if they had been made yesterday."

"That," said the farmer hesitating,—"that must have been my waggon, that was turned here in order to lay down a thousand tiles I ordered the other day to mend the roof with."

The lieutenant drew from his pocket his silver pencil, which had inches marked on it, measured the rut, and making the farmer observe that it was but three inches and a quarter broad, said, looking him steadily in the face—

"The wheels of your waggon are of the

standard breadth, and, of course, twice as broad as those that formed this rut: perhaps it was the car that brought Dame Bontemps here."

"My car!" said the farmer, colouring; "I have, at this moment, no other vehicle than that waggon which you see full of hay there, and the old close cart that stands beneath the shed down yonder."

"These ruts did not make themselves: you are attempting to impose upon justice, and you may perhaps repent it—."

He had not time to finish the sentence, when Dame Bontemps seized his arm, and pulling him into the barn, along with the judge, whom she held with the other hand—

"Gentlemen," said she eagerly, "come with me, you shall see now whether that woman or I merit your esteem most."

So saying, she quitted them with a glance of indignation at the farmer's wife, and running to the end of the barn, pulled away from behind the fragments of the altar some sheaves of wheat, and returning, displayed to the astonished spectators, with an air of triumph, the implements of her profession. It will be recollected that she had deposited them there after taking them from the bag, in order to put the infant into it.

"Every doubt is cleared away," cried the judge:—"arrest this woman Bourgeois and her husband, and every one that inhabits this den of robbers. I well knew that we should get hold of the guilty before we were done."

The farmer's wife, struck dumb by this order, and trembling in every joint, attempted in vain to utter some words of justification. Her voice failed her; a sudden paleness came over her

face; and at length casting herself, or rather falling at the knees, at the very feet of the magistrate, she sobbed out—

"Oh, for mercy's sake, dear sir, do not destroy us! I am—I am, indeed, an honest woman. I have done wrong, I confess, in concealing the truth; but terror—the threats made use of—and above all, the cursed money!—But you shall be told all. Come, husband, we must tell these gentlemen every thing; state every thing that took place: for me, I have not strength to do it."

The farmer was hardly in a better condition to give the information required of him than his wife was. He opened his large dull eyes, and attempted to speak; but he only stammered. The judge himself was confounded with what he had just witnessed, and did not know where to begin his queries. The lieutenant, who had

somewhat more firmness, raised up Madame Bourgeois, who still remained at his knees, and addressing in a gentle tone—

"Be composed; you have doubtless done wrong, extremely wrong, in imposing upon justice; still if, as I believe the case to be, you have not participated in these criminal doings, you have nothing to fear: but above all, disguise nothing, otherwise you shall be treated as an accomplice."

"Ah, sir," said she, wiping her eyes, "I shall tell every thing I know."

"You must first of all," said the magistrate, in a severe tone, "point out the guilty parties. The tall young man, where is he? What have you done with the female that was delivered in the barn? You are answerable for her."

"Ah, my God!" replied she, again bursting

into tears, " I know nothing of where she is now."

M. de Sainville, perceiving that this answer had excited the anger of the judge, again interposed—

" Give her time," said he, " to compose herself, or it will be impossible to procure any information from her. The house is watched; so that, if the criminals be still in it, they cannot escape." M. Dupuy yielded to this argument; and the lieutenant giving his arm to the farmer's wife, the whole party, with the exception of one of the gendarmes, who was left at the door for security's sake, again entered the house.

CHAPTER IV.

MADAME BOURGEOIS was some time before she recovered from the extreme agitation that she had been thrown into. When she became somewhat calm, the judge repeated the question that he had previously put—

"Where are the persons of whom we are in search?"

"They set out from this last night, and they forbade us, at the peril of our lives, to follow them."

"In that case I care very little what you have to say. I have a great mind to send you to prison in their stead."

The lieutenant observed, that if Madame Bourgeois were to tell exactly all that had come under her observation, they might collect from her declaration some valuable information.

"Well, then, speak, and speak clearly," replied the magistrate, with an air of indifference.

"It was last Sunday week," said the farmer's wife, "at the close of the day, about seven o'clock at night, that we saw a tall well-dressed young man come into the house, with a lady hanging on his arm. The lady walked with difficulty. A servant, carrying a bundle, followed them. They asked for beds for the night. The lady, they said, was far advanced

in her pregnancy, and found herself too much fatigued to reach the *château*, at some distance off, where she had purposed to pass the night. I told them that we were not in the habit of lodging strangers; but they insisted on it; and, as it would have been inhumanity to refuse them, I even let them stay, though I told them that they would be but indifferently put up. The young man said a night was soon over; that, besides, his sister was not particular; and for himself, he never slept sounder than on a truss of fresh straw. M. Bourgeois would not hear of that; and so he gave the gentleman the room that his kinsman, the attorney, occupies, when he comes to visit us. The young lady was put in a closet near to me. Next morning M. de Noirval, that was the young man's name, said to me that his sister, for whom country air had been prescribed, had taken a

liking to the place; and that if it were agreeable to us, it might be so arranged that she should remain. He at once, and without haggling, proposed a hundred francs a week, not including the provisions that we should furnish them: he added, that he would pay the money in advance; and I of course accepted so advantageous an offer. The first day they remained in the parlour; but as that was a confinement both to them and us, I thought of carrying a table and a few chairs into the barn, which, as you know, is lighted by windows, and it was there they spent their time in reading and writing."

Here Sainville interrupted the recital of the farmer's wife. "You unquestionably asked whence they came, and where they were going; or, at least, the name of the *château* where they were to have slept?"

"I had a strong desire to find out all that; but it was impossible, as you shall see. The young lady, whose stomach was delicate, took every morning some warm milk. When I carried it to her, the morning after she arrived, I found her bathed in tears. I sat down by her side, and began to console her the best way I could; to which she only replied, while she thanked me in a gentle voice, that to relieve her affliction was a task beyond my power. I was renewing my attempts when the young man came into the room, and told me, with a look of displeasure, that the doctors had ordered silence and solitude as best for his sister, and therefore he requested me earnestly to avoid all occasion of inducing her to speak. This request, or command rather, was accompanied with a waive of his hand that made me quit the chamber immediately. I did

not, however, rest there; and, in order to drive him to an explanation, I drew out a receipt for the lodgings for the week that he had paid us; and I made M. Bourgeois, on tendering it, request to know with what name he should fill it up. 'My name,' replied he, drily, 'is Noirval. I am waiting here for a medical person, who is to take care of my sister; as soon as he arrives we shall proceed to Versailles, where she is to be put to bed.' Seeing my husband about to continue the conversation, he stopped him short by saying—'I am not given to meddle in other people's business, and I expect others to act similarly by mine.'

"There remained but one resource more—that was, to pump the servant. He was not a Frenchman; but he loved his glass. One night that he was sitting by the chimney-corner in the kitchen, smoking his pipe, I offered him

a glass of my cherry-brandy; and asked him, at the same time, if he had been long in his master's employ.

"'Yes!'" was the reply.

"'How many years?' said I.

"He put down his pipe, and held up his two fingers.

"'Is he a kind man, this master of yours? I think he is a little hasty.'

"'As gun-*powter*.'

"'What is his name?'

"'The Count—*tevils! M. Noirfal.*'

"'And the young lady's, that takes on so?'

"'I not know *tat*. *Dis* to your *healt*.'

"This was all that I could get out of him, and my husband was no luckier than I."

"But you can, at least," said the lieutenant, "give us a description of the figure and face of this mysterious personage."

"You have only to see him once," replied Madame Bourgeois, "in order to know him again. His is one of those faces that are never forgotten. He is tall, extremely well made, his features handsome, his eyes large and black, the eye-brows finely arched, the nose aquiline and rather long, his complexion brown, like that of the natives of southern Europe; and had he not spoken French so well, I should have set him down for a Spaniard or an Italian. Although he was lively and passionate, he would sit for whole hours without stirring, and apparently plunged in a profound reverie. I never saw such a changeable person: he smiled so sweet, and yet when he curled his brows his features assumed so terrible and so fearful an expression, that one would have trembled to meet him at the corner of a wood. He was proud too, but not haughty at all; yet he had

a certain way of delivering his commands, that you could not but obey them. His sister, if she were his sister, was the very opposite of all these. There was not the slightest resemblance in their faces, any more than in their tempers. She was goodness and sweetness personified: her complexion beautifully fair; her mouth small and rosy; with such two lovely eyes! but with a languor of expression about them, arising perhaps from the state of her health."

"You appeared to have some doubts just now about their relationship. What induced you to doubt it?"

"I thought it very unlikely that a young lady of her age, and so rich as she appeared to be, should be wandering over the country in such a way with a brother, and without even a maid-servant. I at first suspected that they

were two lovers; that there had been some runaway match, some private marriage; but I changed my opinion on that point, for I noticed that when he fixed a passionate regard on her, she turned away her eyes in a kind of terror. I don't know even yet what to think of it," added the narrator, in a thoughtful tone.

Judge Dupuy became fidgety, and appeared to attach very little interest to her details.

"You have been making a long story of it," said he to the farmer's wife, "and we have not yet got to the event that brought the officers of justice to the farm."

"We shall get to that by-and-bye. Three days ago," she continued, "the young lady began to feel extreme pain, and, as I thought there was no time to be lost, I proposed to

M. de Noirval to send for our own doctor; but he answered that his sister preferred a midwife. I told him, in that case, there was one at Chevreuse who was generally liked; and he then requested the car to bring her. When the horse was yoked, he made his groom set out with it, after he had given him his orders in a strange language that I did not understand; and he added at the same time, turning with a look of authority to my husband—

"'I pay pretty well for being master here: I intend to convey my sister into the barn, and I desire that no one intrude on us there this night. If any one dares to present himself in spite of my prohibition, I shall treat him as an enemy.'

"In pronouncing these words he showed us

the end of the pistols, which he always carried about his person."

"So," said the judge, "you saw nothing of what took place at the lying-in, then?"

"After such threats, how dared we attempt it?—Only, about two o'clock in the morning, hearing the dogs bark when the car came back, I got up, and saw from the window a woman, whose eyes were blindfolded with a handkerchief, led into the barn. When I saw that, I said to my good man, 'I feel alarmed at these doings; these people have given us a great deal of money, but I had rather than double the sum that they had never set foot in the house. If I did not dread the vengeance of that terrible man, I would go to-morrow morning and make a declaration before the mayor of Mesnil.'"

"You had nothing to do with mayors," said the judge, drawing himself up; "it was to me, madam, you ought to have addressed yourself:—but go on."

The farmer's wife continued her story:—"Next day, after dinner, a man on horseback, who seemed in a violent hurry, brought a letter for M. de Noirval. When he cast his eye over it he changed colour, and calling for M. Bourgeois, he asked him if he could spare his car again: but this time his object was to buy it, as well as the horse that drew it. He paid us, without question, the four hundred francs that we had given for them three years before; and then, addressing me, he said I must give him one of our mattresses, and help him to place his sister in the vehicle in the best way possible.

"'How can you talk, sir,' said I to him, 'of

madame's travelling in her present condition? Stop till the nine days are up at least.'

" He replied, that it was impossible to delay a single hour; and made me go into the barn, and tell his sister that they must immediately set out.

" ' Whither would you conduct me?' answered she with a faltering voice; ' leave me to die here.'

" He replied, that she should not die, and that he would take care that nothing was wanting to her comfort. While he was making his preparations I remained with the young woman, who, seemingly affected by my attentions, eagerly asked me if I could calculate on the honesty of the midwife that had been with her the previous night. I replied, that I had not seen the person that was with her; but if it were, as I supposed it to be, Madame Bon-

temps of Chevreuse, she merited every confidence.—You perceive, madam," added she, turning to Dame Bontemps, "that I did you all manner of justice."

Dame Bontemps thanked her by an inclination of her head.—"Soon after, M. de Noirval and his sister quitted us: the lady was laid in the bottom of the car, which was driven by the groom; the gentleman walked by its side."

"What route did they take?" said the lieutenant.

"On leaving they took to the left; but he expressly forbade our following him. My husband, however, was telling me this morning, that he believed, from the tracks of the car which he noticed in the wood, that they got round to the Voisins road."

"In all these matters," said the lieutenant, looking at the farmer's wife with an eye that was accustomed to penetrate through the thickest coverings of dissimulation,—"in all these matters your conduct has been irreproachable, if it was exactly in conformity with the story you have told us. But one thing makes me doubt this—I mean the terror you just now displayed in the barn. Something must have taken place which, as you imagine, has compromised you, and which you have therefore an interest in concealing."

These words, pronounced in a stern tone, renewed the agitation of *madame:* she reddened and hesitated; and the lieutenant, deeming the opportunity favourable for drawing from her a full and entire confession, added, with a loud voice—

"No prevarication with us! We must know what became of the infant of the unhappy lady that was delivered."

"It was not I—I swear to you, I know nothing of it—I know not—."

"You will perhaps find it out," said the irascible M. Dupuy, "in the prison of Versailles; whither I shall send you this moment, both you and your husband."

"They made me take an oath," said the farmer's wife, weeping, "to observe the profoundest silence."

"Such oaths are criminal, and bind not the conscience."

"Well, then, the infant was laid in a corner of the garden, behind the raspberry-bushes."

"Instantly conduct us to the spot."

"Thank God! it is no longer there. The servant that carried it thither, by his master's

orders, came to me about an hour afterwards, and said to me,—'My master would not care that the poor little creature which has just come into the world were out of it again; but it is not dead after all. I felt the heart beat, and so I covered it over with leaves instead of burying it. You are a decent woman; go, and save the life of the infant; but, above all things, breathe not a word on the subject.' I did not hesitate to follow the dictates of humanity, when so appealed to; and running into the garden, I found the baby, still breathing, in the spot that he had pointed out to me. I carried it immediately to our shepherd's wife, who lives in a separate house from us; she is a good creature, and mother of a family, and I was certain I could trust her. Her sister that stays at Mesnil is employed to nurse for the Foundling there, and she was to carry

the new-born infant to the hospital this very day. I told her to be sure to get a ticket. I expect it every minute, and when it comes, I shall deposit it in your hands."

"But why," asked the lieutenant, "seek to conceal from us so important a circumstance? You have done a deed which is so much the more praiseworthy, that it was not accomplished without considerable danger; and yet your most misplaced reservations gave you an appearance of criminality that might have put you to very great trouble."

"I confess it; but I felt persuaded that you were entirely ignorant of every thing concerning the child; and I cannot conceive, even now, how you discovered that there existed any desire to get rid of it. And besides, I must declare to you, that I was withheld by the terror which the gentleman had inspired me

with. Until I see him bound and ironed, I shall not feel myself safe from his vengeance. And it is to be considered also that he paid us handsomely, and therefore it was not our part to inform against him."

Madame Bourgeois had told the truth this time; for all that she described had happened exactly as she described it: one fact, however, she had not thought fit to mention—that, at the moment of his departure, Noirval had come into her room, and shown her a purse well filled with napoleons; and told her, at the same time, that its contents would be the reward of her discretion. "If," said he, "you do not breathe a syllable about any thing you may have seen or learned of what has been taking place under your roof, and if you refuse to answer any interrogatories that may be put to you that shall compromise my safety, then this gold shall be

yours; but if, on the other hand, through curiosity or fear, you be prevailed on to injure me, woe betide you! Good-by. VENGEANCE, OR GENEROSITY!—Such is my motto, and such the secret of my life."

There was in the look and tones of Noirval something so terrible and sinistrous, that they were capable of freezing with fear the stoutest heart. He had besides thrown out a tempting bait to the cupidity of the woman he addressed; and he had had occasion to observe that that passion governed her with resistless sway.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Madame Bourgeois had ceased speaking, the judge said, in a peevish tone—"You see how it is, M. de Sainville, our expedition has failed; we might just as well have remained at Chevreuse."

"I don't think so," replied the lieutenant: "we have picked up some valuable hints; and, besides, we have found the missing infant."

"I should have liked better to have laid

my hand on the missing rogue. That would be a capture of some interest. But for the present, at least, it is useless to think about it; and so you may as well call in your gendarmes."

As he was finishing this sentence, a loud noise, as of people disputing, was heard in the court-yard. Sainville sprung out, and in a moment afterwards he entered accompanied by his assistant, whom, along with two others on horseback and in disguise, he had stationed outside of the farm-house. The gendarme stated that he had arrested two young men, while attempting to get into the house by climbing over the garden-walls; that they had resisted, especially one of them, and refused to show their passports; but that, after an exchange of a few blows, they had been lodged safely in the barn, where they then were. "Here," said he, "is

a portfolio, that fell out of the pocket of the more obstinate of the two prisoners."

"We shall examine them at once," said the judge briskly, and rubbing his hands from joy at this unexpected prospect of a committal.

The officer went out, and soon returned with the prisoners, as well as the gendarmes who had arrested them.

The young men had no appearance of vagrancy: they were genteelly dressed; and in the apparel of him that seemed the elder of the two, there was a good deal even of nicety apparent. His pantaloons, with their large gathers and broad seams, fell over a pair of gaiters of ticking, that seemed as if pasted to his ancles. His shoes, much too fine for country wear, bespoke an inhabitant of the city; and his hunting-coat was cut after the very last new mode. The knot of his silk hand-

kerchief, which was tied lozenge-wise, and served as a cravat, had an air of fashionable life; and his hair-cloth cap, which was placed on the one side of his head, gave him almost a military air. The only weapon, however, that he carried, was an umbrella with a crooked handle, and of a common colour, and which was useful in two ways—it protected him from the rain when the weather required it, and assisted his oratory by giving additional force to his gesticulation. The evolutions of the silver-topped cane of a drum-major were not indeed more rapid, nor more expressive. The gentleman in question was short, and his frame was badly put together; the trunk was long, and the thighs short and slim. His eyes were black, and his eyebrows shaggy; and when he frowned, his countenance assumed a lowering and even ferocious expression. A slight obser-

vation, however, served to show that this was less the effect of his ordinary disposition, than of momentary mental excitement. His forehead was high, and his upraised hair formed a sort of crest on the crown of his head.

His fellow-traveller had an oval face, with the blooming and fresh complexion of youth: his eyes were blue; his hair light-coloured and curly; his air was jovial; his manners open; and the general expression of his face, carelessness and gaiety. He wore a great-coat of grey camlet, made wide, and soiled rather than worn, nankeen trowsers, and a black straw hat.

M. Dupuy proceeded to the examination of the prisoners without a moment's delay. The eldest stated that his name was David Collinet; that he was a native of Kerhonet, in the department of Finisterre; his age twenty-nine. When questioned as to his profession, he replied

with emphatic pride—"at present a man of letters; but," added he, assuming a look of anger which he meant to be imposing, "I am as well, perhaps better, acquainted with the law of the land than those who listen to me and examine me: not only have I passed my examinations at Rennes, but I am a practising counsel at the bar of Paris. The magistrate will not therefore be surprised that I dispute the competency of his jurisdiction, and that I protest with all my energy against the power that he arrogates at this moment over my person, and that of my young friend. Yes, I protest in the most formal manner against this unprecedented and vexatious proceeding; and, at the same time, I reserve to myself full power and right to summon and prosecute to the utmost the authors, abettors, and executors of an outrage prohibited by the code, by the

rights of the people, and by the very charter itself, if it be allowable, I should add, to invoke a document which professed to be the guarantee of our liberties."

"Mr. Practising Counsel," replied the magistrate with affected phlegm, but in a tone half sour, half sweet, that ill concealed the ill-natured pleasure he felt in getting within his clutches a member of that modern bar, where he saw none but ultra-partisans of liberal ideas, and, by consequence, enemies of the ancient magistracy, "be calm. Passion sits but indifferently on persons of your profession. You shall have all justice. Gendarme, where did you arrest the prisoner?"

The gendarme replied, that he had caught him by the leg at the moment that he was scaling the wall of the garden.

"What excuse did he offer to you?"

"None.—'I am taking a walk,' said he; 'go about your business.'"

"My object," interrupted Collinet, "was to rejoin my friend, who was sketching the turret at the end of the garden-wall."

"It is true," replied the gendarme, "that the other fellow had crept into the turret; but it should be added that, when he saw his companion laid hold on, he picked a large pebble from the wall and threw it at my head. Luckily I was stooping down, and it only hit my hat, which bears the marks of it yet. I made him a sign with my pistol to get down the way he had climbed up, as speedily as possible; and whistling at the same time to my comrades, they came to my assistance, and we got hold of both the fellows."

"You must confess, M. Collinet," said the magistrate, "that it was a most unbecoming

thing in a barrister, who ought to show an example of respect to the laws and to exterior decency, to put himself in a position of being arrested as a malefactor."

"A malefactor!" echoed the man of letters indignantly; "dare you apply so insulting an epithet to a respectable citizen? one who performs, at one and the same time, the two noblest duties that it is given to a mortal to fulfil —the defence of innocence, and the not less glorious task of enlightening his country? I see how it is; you approve of the conduct of the gendarme in arresting me."

"Certainly, in such a case I should arrest a peer of France; that is," added he, as if astonished at his own boldness, "if I caught him *flagrante delicto*; you understand me."

"If I am not a peer," replied the author,

drawing himself up, "I have a relation who has been called to the peerage by writ."

"A Collinet, I presume," said the judge with an air of disdain; adding in a muttering tone—"precious successors of the dukes of Aquitaine and Normandy! *O tempora!* But let us go on to the next prisoner. What is your name and profession, young gentleman?"

"Hyacinthe Mitton, draughtsman and lithographist, born in Paris, and educated under M. Girodet."

"Show us your papers."

The young man drew from the pocket of his great-coat a large-sized *livret*,* filled with drawings and sketches, and handed it to the magistrate, saying—"This passport is as good as any other."

* This is the name commonly given to a book that soldiers carry about with them, and in which their names and descriptions are inserted.

hang it! I don't care about being sent to prison. I know nothing about those abodes of pleasure; but they must contain some capital subjects: famous caricatures the jailers and turnkeys—nice picturesque interiors."

"I am not," said the judge, interrupting him, "the dupe of the pretended indifference that you put on in order to elude the law. I shall write," he added, "to the director-general of the police, and enclose this portrait in order to complete the description of the party of whom we are in search; and these gentlemen must go under an escort to Versailles, where the court will pronounce their fate."

"You can do so," said Collinet in a solemn tone; "an armed and blind force is at your beck. But have you reflected on the consequences? Are you not afraid of the eloquent appeal that the friends of liberty will not fail to make in

my favour? They are still numerous in both chambers; and, looking to your own person, Mr. Judge, have you pondered on the thundering accusations that will fall upon you? You will be dismissed—ruined!"

"Attend you to your own defence, I shall take care of mine."

"Had the agents of government any prudence," continued Collinet, "they would see the propriety of acting with circumspection in the present state of men's feelings. Is it possible to blind one's eyes to the fermentation that now agitates the minds of the public? Amidst the conspiracies which are every where breaking out throughout Europe, the surface alone is at rest. A hidden fire is slowly eating its way, under the half-extinguished ashes, and asks but a single spark to bid it burst into the most terrible conflagration!"

"Paltry declamation!" said the magistrate; "a counsellor's gallimaufry, only worthy of contempt."

"Well, after all," (these words he spoke with the suppressed voice and lowering look of a conspirator,) "it is passing strange! the obstinacy and ignorance of a country magistrate may perhaps lead to the emancipation of my country. Ah, if it be so arranged, happy, a thousand times happy should I be to co-operate in the great work of regeneration by the temporary sacrifice of my personal freedom!"

"Egad, he speaks most eloquently!" said the young lithographist, addressing the lieutenant, with an air of as much ease as if he had had no interest in the discussion. He was proceeding, when Mr. Justice Dupuy, stung to the quick by the reply of the barrister, put an

end to farther colloquy by ordering the gendarmes to remove the prisoners.

Whilst the warrant of committal was making out, and the horse that was to take him back to Chevreuse was being put to the cabriolet, the farmer, who saw it was his interest to stand on good terms with the justice, brought some glasses and a bottle of Andressy wine, whose reputation extends throughout the boundaries of the Seine and Oise, and which the great Henry used to look on as the best vintage in France. The lieutenant, in drinking to M. Dupuy, thought proper to represent to him that there was some degree of severity in sending two young men to prison, whose only crime was clambering over a garden-wall. It was enough certainly to justify their arrest by the officers of justice, but not to implicate them in a criminal transaction to which they appeared

absolute strangers. "In your place," added he, "I should let them off with a smart reprimand."

"I would do so willingly," replied the justice, "if the case regarded the draughtsman only, who seems to me a young giddy-head without malice and without thought. But that is not the case with the learned advocate. He is one of those demoniacs who, if they were allowed, would speedily bring back the age of anarchy and revolution. Did you mark with what insolence he declined my authority?"

"He was wrong, certainly; but don't you fear that you may be charged in your turn with having exceeded your powers? Consider, M. Dupuy, that, though the ministers are royalists, the public offices are still filled with liberals, who delight in an opportunity of

harassing any one that, like you or me, is attached to the old *régime*."

"But you forget the portrait that we have seized. That is a strong proof, and keeps my responsibility from all question. In fact," added he smiling, for the Andressy wine had produced in him the ordinary effects of the juice of the grape—frankness of speech, and a sort of jolly mirth, "let your good souls repeat as an axiom, that it is better a hundred rogues should escape than one honest man suffer,—a maxim which no doubt reads beautifully in a tale;—mine—I say this between ourselves—is, to prison with a hundred innocent, rather than allow one criminal to escape! What think you of that maxim, my friend?"

"A hundred! that is a great many;—yet there is some truth in what you say at the same time."

M. de Sainville was a humane man, and a generous one, though he said this; but our professional pursuits exercise a constant influence over our characters, and modify them without our being conscious of their power.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILST the magistrate was pursuing, with Dame Bontemps, his route back to Chevreuse, the prisoners, escorted by two gendarmes, followed that which led to Versailles.

The young draughtsman, who kept his gay humour without suffering any object of interest that presented itself to his eyes to escape attentive observation, went on cracking jokes and amusing his escort.

The companion of his mischance was, on the

contrary, silent and thoughtful. It was not the criminal act with which he found himself implicated that caused him the slightest disquiet; but he was by no means so easy respecting certain papers in the portfolio that had dropped from his pocket in his struggle with the gendarmes, and which they refused to restore to him. These papers, he was aware, might compromise not only himself, but a number of his friends.

The passion and pride, that constituted the ground-work of his character, had made him reply with haughtiness to the interrogatories of the magistrate; and, when the dispute got warm, his arrest, which he looked on as illegal, appeared to him an excellent occasion of acquiring celebrity and even glory at the expense of a few days' detention. The vanity of an author came in for its share. He pictured

himself drawing up an eloquent petition, full of powerful argument and sublime eloquence. The deputies of the opposition, with many of the greatest speakers with whom he was intimately acquainted, would not fail to lay hold of an incident so opportune for the cause of freedom; they would make it the subject of a solemn discussion. The chambers, the public, would have no other subject of conversation but him; and, in the meanwhile, he would compose essays and pamphlets, which the newspapers of his party would laud to the skies: they would run through two, three, perhaps four editions! Such were the ideas of fame and of profit, which are but seldom separated in the head of a *littérateur*, that suppressed, in M. Collinet, all sentiments of prudence and moderation.

But three hours' travel on foot, between two

gendarmes, and the sneering looks of the passengers, which their case did not fail to attract, had sufficed to cool down his political and literary enthusiasm. He now began to ponder, somewhat sorrowfully, on the least injurious consequences of this mishap—to be kept away from his business and his amusements for several days, perhaps weeks:—for Justice resembles disease in this, that her speed in pouncing on her victims is as remarkable as her dilatoriness in letting them go again.

Mitton, perceiving his friend a prey to this melancholy humour, in order to rouse him, gave him a smart slap on the shoulder, apostrophising him at the same time with—

"What a pretty tom-noddy you are, with all your wit, to get us into such a scrape as this! If you had been content, instead of arguing the matter with the magistrate, to

state the simple facts of the case, to tell him, for instance, that you had had the honour to accompany me in a tale-hunting excursion, by which it was your intention to profit, by describing with your pen those objects that I drew with my pencil—and my sketch-book and your scrap-book would have sufficiently proved all this—we should have been released at once. It is true, the scaling of the wall remained still; but, as we had taken nothing and broken nothing, it is evident that we should have got rid of that for a rebuke at most. The officer of the gendarmes, who seemed an honest fellow, would have taken our part, and the justice must have given in. But no—thy stubborn head had determined otherwise. I am enraged when I think that I promised positively to be at the green-room of the *Variétés* this evening at seven."

"You think of nothing but amusements."

"And what the deuce came I into the world for else, Mr. Philosopher? I console myself, however, with the prospect of our triumphal entry into the capital of the department of the Seine and Oise; especially, as I hope it is, if this be a market-day. What an interesting scene! Can't you, even at this distance, behold the gaping boobies of the town and country opening their large eyes and larger mouths, and staring at us with as much eagerness as if we were two wild beasts; and the jokers of the crowd making game of your military cap, and taking their fun out of your elegant umbrella? Then you'll get into such a passion! and that will give them a laugh the more! Egad, it would make a most capital caricature; it will furnish you with a famous chapter for your novel.

These last words, which brought to his mind a cherished work, about whose composition he was almost as busy as about his politics, made the man of letters smile. In the mean time, they had passed the gate of St. Cyr, and were approaching the ancient residence of the kings of France, precisely at the point where the highway to Bretagne runs through the little park, separating the orangery garden from the *pièce des Suisses*. Had the project, which was worthy of the magnificence of Louis XIV., been completed, this piece of water, with its beautiful outline and vast extent, would have become the port of the Maintenon Canal; that undertaking, whose immense aqueduct presents, even in its present state of dilapidation, as imposing a monument as any that has been since reared by the sovereign people. At present, broad alleys and pleasant walks circle about the lake, beautifully

contrasting with the height that hangs over the south side, crowned as it is by a fine clump of majestic pines. Exotics in the central provinces, these trees look as if they were the representatives of our mountains on a visit to their king. The beauty of the scenery attracted the attention of the young lithographist, who gazed on it now for the first time; but on casting his eyes towards the left, he was still more delighted by the view of the orangery. Young Mitton possessed in a very high degree the feeling of the beautiful; or, in other words, he possessed an exquisite taste—that noble instinct, that precious gift which Heaven accords only to its favourites, and which ensures to them during life the foremost rank and most advantageous place in the great theatre of those wonders that nature and art exhibit. He marked with admiration the skill with which the architect had taken ad-

vantage, in constructing the palace of Versailles, of the inequalities of the ground; and how judiciously he had employed the Tuscan order, with its embossments and imposing columns, in the exterior decoration of the vast vaults of the mansion; from which two magnificent sweeps of steps, of the finest proportions, lead to the terrace above; making the whole, when viewed from the low ground, look like the basement of the palace of light and elegant Ionic architecture, which, according to a later design, rises proudly over it.

The state of the sky at that moment added to the loveliness of the scene. The mid-day sun shot down its rays on the wing of the *château* that they were contemplating, and heightened the splendour of the golden tinge that time had imparted to it; whilst the balustrade and the trophies that crowned the roof were sharply out-

lined in the dark-blue ground of a thick cloud, which enveloped the whole of the northern portion of the horizon. The fore-ground of the picture was enlivened by the borders, set thick with thousands of flowers, that form the parterre of the private garden of the orangery. A few shrubs of a milder clime, myrtles, rose-laurels, orange-trees of every variety, mixed with marble vases, edged the compartments of the parterre, and surrounded the fountain, from which rose a sparkling and powerful *jet-d'eau*. Amongst the orange-trees was conspicuous that which bears the name of the "great Bourbon," and which the public owe to the munificence of Francis I. This tree, which is of a most venerable age, is still as leafy and vigorous as in the spring-tide of its life; and appears to feel no more of the touch of time than has the glory of its planter, the restorer of letters and pro-

tector of the arts. Our young draughtsman, who was captivated with the scene, endeavoured, from a sentiment natural to a kindly disposition, to make his friend a participator in the pleasure that he experienced; but the attempt was a vain one. The discouraging answer of the barrister was—

"I can see no ground for such violent delight in the contemplation of a parcel of stones, heaped up on one another by a despot at an immense expense."

"Why," replied Mitton sharply, for he had more historic lore than commonly falls to the lot of painters, "you must at least allow that this palace and these gardens cost France nothing;—the Dutchmen paid for them."

"A pretty philosophical answer," said Collinet, with a disdainful air; "you speak as if the Dutch were not men, and members of the one

great family. What am I saying? At that time the Batavian nation held a much higher rank, in the eye of reason, than our own. They were republicans—freemen—Protestants!"

As he pronounced these words, a confused noise was heard in the environs of the palace, mingled with tumultuous acclamations. In a moment the higher parterre and the terrace were covered with a multitude of people, while others were seen hastily descending the great stairs and the ramp that leads along the grove. The monarch had just arrived from St. Cloud, where he was residing with his family, to visit the gardens of Versailles, which had been recently repaired. He was seated in an open carriage, with the two princesses his nieces by his side: Monsieur had gone forward with the Duke d'Angoulême to St. Cyr, where the pupils of the Royal School were exercising with blank-

cartridges. The king was dressed in blue uniform, without any decoration, except the epaulets, which had crowns of gold instead of stars. A hat with a white plume covered his venerable forehead. Age and sickness had not yet broken down that majestic figure so finely suited to the offspring of so many kings; his eyes had, indeed, lost somewhat of their fire, yet he still preserved that imposing look, which none ever beheld and forgot. His air was serene; and benevolence and affability tempered the dignity which gave its habitual expression to his physiognomy. He appeared deeply affected by the reception that the inhabitants of Versailles gave him as they crowded to meet him, with every demonstration of sincere pleasure; and hung round his carriage, which they were freely permitted to approach, the officers of the guard and the pages in wait-

ing being his only attendants, for the escort did not enter the gardens. Though the feelings of affection in the crowd were the same, the expression of them varied very sensibly with the age of the individuals. While the young people, lively and curious, pressed close to the wheels of the *calèche*, and impeded the advance of the horses, their ancient habits of respect acted as a restraint upon the old, who, with moistened eyes and hat in hand, modestly ranged themselves along the hedge, and only testified their good wishes by a few faltering words, when the keen and piercing glance of the monarch happened to distinguish among them some ancient and faithful servant broken down by time and distress, and smiling kindly upon him, by his consoling regard revived his sunken heart, and made him forget whole years of suffering.

The princesses had their share in the acclamations of the crowd; and with the shouts of "Long live the King" were mingled cries of "Long live *Madame*." It was with a view to the assertion of their peculiar claims on her notice, and to put her in mind that she had been born among them, that the inhabitants of Versailles did not salute the daughter of Louis XVI. by the title of her husband: a name which he subsequently rendered so glorious. And when they addressed her younger sister as "mother of the Duke de Bordeaux," there was something very affecting in this selection of a title which spoke of love and of hope, rather than one which recalled the idea of recent losses, and was pregnant with tearful recollections.

The king, on his arrival at St. Cloud, entered the gardens by the *grille du dragon*.

The statues and marbles and bronzes of the magnificent piece of water had been lately cleaned: the large fountains were playing; and he gazed with pleasure for some minutes on a sight which never fails to attract crowds of strangers, and which has a most magical effect, especially when the rays of a bright sun are darting through the spouting waters. He then visited the baths of Apollo, and the colonnade; and lastly, he drove along the alleys of an extensive grove, that had been newly formed, after the model of the garden at Hartwell; that honourable asylum, where he had supported adversity with sufficient constancy to enable him to review the scenes of it with pleasure. The orangery was the limit of his drive.

As soon as the two gendarmes of Chevreuse, who with their prisoners were advancing to meet the carriage, perceived the royal party enter,

they halted and drew their swords; and Mitton hastily pulled off his hat. Collinet, however, in order to avoid that ceremony, stooped down to the ground, and pretended to be tying the points of his shoe. His comrade perceived this petty piece of trickery, and reproved it.

"Would it not be best," said he, "to salute the king as every body else does, rather than to prostrate yourself before him in that fashion?"

When the king departed, the prisoners pursued their journey to the town; but they did not meet on their entrance with the honours of a mob triumph, as Collinet had feared, and as his companion desired. The streets were deserted, for the people had crowded to the park to enjoy the sight of the sovereign; and, in addition, the storm which had been long gathering at that moment burst, and a heavy shower scattered the few idlers that remained.

It was to no purpose that Collinet unfurled his umbrella; he was wetted to the skin in an instant. Mitton was also soaked, but his joyous temper made him discover subjects of consolation in whatever happened; and he exclaimed, as he entered the prison-door—"After all, in such terrible weather it is much more comfortable to be here than in the open air."

I shall not affirm that the sight of the grated doors, and the creaking of the bolts, and the aspect of the jailer, and, above all, the darkness of his new dwelling, would not soon have destroyed his habitual gaiety. Happily, his stay in that mansion of sorrow was not prolonged beyond the night.

CHAPTER VII.

THE magistrate, to whom the justice had addressed the packet belonging to the prisoners, was named Duseltier. He was an intelligent, well-informed man, about thirty years of age; his manners were correct; and he possessed, in an eminent degree, the first qualification of a judge—integrity. His failings were ambition, vanity, enviousness; a combination of qualities by no means rare. He was son of one of the head clerks in the office of the

minister of justice; and his uncle was a General Dorval, whom Napoleon, in recompense for his long services, and yet more for his unbounded devotion to his imperial person, had enriched with numerous gifts, and dignified with the title of count. That uncle had a son, and the two cousins went to school together; but the only result of this arrangement, which ought naturally to have produced a lively and durable friendship, was a species of rivalry at once envious and malevolent. Dusellier, who was a diligent student, and a clever one, carried off the prizes, and gained the first places; while young Dorval, an indolent boy, of small parts, and always at the bottom of his form, had no other revenge than to tell his companion "Work away! sweat blood, sweat water, you'll never be any thing but a petty underling, while I shall be an officer and a

count like my father, and perhaps a duke." The vanity of young Duselliet was deeply wounded by these predictions, and the more so that their accomplishment was but too probable; for the obscure rank of his father did not admit of his embarking in the career of ambition with the advantages of the son of a man whose fortune was already made. When, however, he had finished his studies, and, by the interest of his uncle, had obtained the situation of deputy to the imperial *procureur* at the court of N——, the excessively high opinion that he entertained of his own talents made him believe he might yet arrive at some of those eminent posts to which, subsequent to the revolution, many persons who had started from a lower rank than his had nevertheless attained. The restoration deranged his plans: in 1815, during the hundred

days, he again caught a glimmering of hope, and eagerly signed the additional act; but on the return of the king, he gave himself up for lost. Thanks, however, to the extreme indulgence of the ministry, to whom, indeed, at that time, liberal opinions formed a ground of recommendation rather than a reason for rejection, he was nominated judge of the court of Versailles. Even this dignified and permanent office was far from satisfying the desires of an ambitious man, who looked on his elevation to the bench as an exclusion from the titles and dignities that had been the object of his longings from his earliest youth; and what aggravated the wound that his vanity had received, was to behold his cousin Dorval figuring in the royal guard, although he had fought along with Napoleon at Waterloo, and raised to the same rank that he would have held had

his old master been the victor. With a temper thus soured did M. Dusellier betake himself to the Bourbons; he wished their fall, not because he hated them, but because he saw in legitimacy an insurmountable obstacle to his chimerical ideas of elevation. He could not conceal from himself the fatal consequences that must necessarily ensue to his country from such a catastrophe; but the ruling passion stilled the voice of duty and the suggestions of reason. Two journals, which were then famous, contributed to foster these fatal illusions —we mean the *Minerve* and the *Renommée*; and they were still more confirmed when the revolutions in Spain, and in Naples, and Piedmont, burst forth; for he had no doubt that these were the preludes to what was about to take place in France. Indeed he believed, and

he was not alone in that belief, that the insurrectional movement would perform the tour of the whole globe. He felt strongly tempted to take an active part in those great changes, not that he was impelled to such a line of conduct by the sort of fascination that leads on youth to attempt whatever is new and hazardous, or that he was at all inclined to labour for the welfare of his country at his own cost. His motives were much less dignified. His only object was to procure for himself, from among the spoils of the vanquished party, a situation of more power and influence. But, restless and dissatisfied as was the temper of Dusellier, his character was timid even to pusillanimity. Perhaps this defect arose out of his feebleness of constitution and indifferent health: certain it is, that he was about that time attacked by a complaint

in the chest, to which he afterwards fell a victim.* He confined himself therefore to the expression of his sentiments to such persons as he knew to be liberals; and if to those he did not say, in so many words, that the government ought to be overturned, he proved at least very clearly that the existing order of things ought not to be maintained.

When M. Dusellier opened the packet that had been addressed to him by the district magistrate of Chevreuse, he saw at once that the two young men were utter strangers to the crime under investigation. But the papers in the portfolio of Collinet, he perceived, might give rise to proceedings of another description. That young man had had the imprudence to preserve the letters, which proved that he was

* He died in the autumn of 1824, at the *Eaux Bonnes*, in the department of the High Pyrenees.—*Note of the French editor.*

a member of those secret societies, which were at that time every where exciting the spirit of revolt and of sedition. It is true they were not signed; but it was easy to see that they had been written by persons holding important offices in the civil and military departments of the state. The magistrate balanced for some time as to what use he should make of these papers; his first feeling, conformable to his duty, was to send them, along with the prisoners, to the director-general of the police: this would have shown his zeal for the royal cause; but looking on that cause as irrevocably lost, he was unwilling to let slip an opportunity of strengthening his interest with the party that was about to ascend to power. He therefore summoned the prisoners to his presence, asked them a few questions very politely, and after receiving a satisfactory explanation of their

journey to Chevreuse, he conducted the young barrister into his closet, and put the *porte-feuille* in his hands.

"Your innocence has been clearly established, and I am about to give orders for your enlargement: I do this with so much the greater pleasure, that I see by your correspondence your sentiments are patriotic, and that you are connected with the leaders of a party which has the honour and glory of the country at heart."

The barrister was confounded by this address, and dreading lest a seeming conformity of principles, which he had so little reason to expect, concealed some snare, he hesitated to reply. The judge, as if reading his feelings, went on—

"I do not ask you," said he, "although perhaps I might legally do so, the names of the

persons who wrote these letters; nor do I require any details respecting deliberations, in which, in my present position, I cannot share: you can easily appreciate the delicate nature of my present conduct, and I am persuaded that it will never quit your recollection; and that you will not omit to mention it to those of your friends whom a more strict investigation on my side might place in a very disagreeable position. One thing, M. Collinet, I must say to you; you cannot use too much prudence and circumspection in these matters. In affairs of high importance, no paper ought ever to be preserved that can in the slightest degree compromise ourselves or our friends. In future, never keep any document that is not essential to your enterprise. I hope it will succeed; I hope that an energetic and liberal government will again place France at the head of the nations. I

hope also, that such a grand regeneration will take place without drawing any more tears from humanity. The impulse once given, the consent will be universal: there will be but a few isolated attempts at resistance to put down. The events of the 20th of March afford a good augury: unquestionably the king will adopt the same line of conduct now that he did on that occasion; he will never dream of exposing himself or his family to the deplorable consequences of an useless defence. I should, for my part, be deeply grieved were any misfortune to happen to the venerable old man, or to any of the princes of his family. In fact, let people say what they will, the Bourbons are not a bad race; but they are surrounded by those that are. And, were they not so, how can we hope that men born in a court should rise to the level of their times and of circumstances? They

can withdraw peaceably to Hartwell, or any other retreat, and leave us to regulate our own destinies. We have no reason this time to fear a coalition of the powers. Europe is now enlightened by the indifferent success of the second restoration, and has renounced the chimerical project of subjecting thirty millions of Frenchmen to a government whose feebleness and unskilfulness they despise."

Collinet, whose confidence was completely restored by this confession of faith, instead of thanking the judge for his extreme pliancy, told him, with an air of easy assurance, that every thing was provided for; that the army was as secure as the people; and that as for foreigners, they cared very little about them. "They dare not stir," said he arrogantly; "for, thank Heaven! they have enough of business of their own on hand not to trouble themselves

with ours. Believe me, sir, there is a mine under every throne in Europe. Their sceptres are worm-eaten: fanaticism and superstition are disappearing like the phantoms of the night, when the bright day appears. Yes, our regeneration will be complete, glorious, eternal! As to the Bourbons, in whom you seem to take a lively interest, in which I confess I do not participate, their insignificance is their best protection."

"What I said," returned the judge, "about the safe conduct that should be given to the Bourbons, was much more for humanity's sake than for theirs. You will allow that that interest ought to be held sacred by all the friends of freedom."

Their conversation ended here, for the judge was in a hurry to expedite the order for their enlargement. Collinet, on receiving it, thanked

him coldly, and with an air of dignity. As for Mitton, on quitting the prison, he leaped for joy, and swore devoutly that no one should ever catch him in another.

M. Dusellier, who had failed in his object, remained pensive and mortified. Nothing can be more humiliating than the situation of a man who has betrayed his trust; and instead of receiving the reward he expected for his meanness, is treated by those whom he sought to serve with indifference or contempt.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTHING but the most urgent cause could have induced Noirval to leave the farm-house of "Our Lady of the Rock," and to expose to the hazard of a journey, in her precarious condition, a young lady in whose safety he took so lively an interest. But the information he had received admitted of no delay. He was told that if his retreat was not discovered, the persons who were in quest of him had reason to suspect that he was in the neighbourhood of

Versailles; and that such was the extreme activity of their search, in a short time it would be impossible for either himself or his companion to escape it. Determined to get to a distance from his late residence as quickly as possible, without exposing the life of the female that he conducted, he travelled all night across the country; nor did he halt until break of day, when he stopped at a little inn in the outskirts of a village about six leagues distant from the capital, and on the high-road to Orleans. Before proceeding farther in the direction of an asylum the prospect of which was held out to him in that quarter, he deemed it best to confer with the personage who had shared with him for a long time in the grand business with which so many interests were connected. He set out for Paris about night-fall, mounted on the horse that had drawn the car, after leaving

strict orders to his groom to allow no one whatever to have access to his sister, from whom his absence was concealed. The people of the house imagined that he was only gone in order to procure a doctor that lived in the neighbourhood.

Noirval alighted about ten o'clock at one of the houses in the Faubourg St. Marceau; it was the abode of a foreign nurseryman, whose address had been sent him. He knocked at the door, and when it was at length opened, he presented a card, on which were marked the letters P. M. N. C., and was immediately admitted, and conducted to a green-house at the foot of the garden. A parcel of frames piled up on the floor of the building concealed the entrance to a cellar, the spiracles of which opening into an old cart-shed, were covered over by clematis and other creeping shrubs.

In this place a bed had been prepared for him, and the gardener accosting him respectfully, told him that he was ready to execute the orders that had been transmitted to him.

Next morning a carriage halted at the house of the nurseryman, from which a lady, followed by a servant in plain clothes, alighted. She came to purchase flowers, which she often did; and one of the lads having informed the gardener of her arrival, the latter ran hastily to wait upon her. The lady visited along with him a number of flower-plats; selected some shrubs, which she had conveyed to her carriage; and, as the day was fine, she ordered the servant to mount and look after the pots, and bidding the coach drive on, said she should return to town on foot.

But this lady will act so important a part in the whole of our history, that it is absolutely

necessary to enter into some details respecting her person, her character, and her rank in life.

The Countess Stanislas Gradiska was a princess of the house of Sobiuska, and allied, in consequence, to the most noble families in Poland and Lithuania; nor did the elevation of her mind belie the dignity of her birth. Inheriting a vast fortune, she was forced by her parents at a very early age to marry Count Gradiska, palatine of Sendomir, a man twenty years older than herself, and who, notwithstanding her beauty, neglected her for the company of an old mistress.

The youthful countess, irritated rather than jealous, determined to quit his society for ever; and as the lapse of time produced no alteration in her resolution, a few years after their separation the pair by common consent took advantage of the singularly accommodating spirit

of the Polish Catholic church, and were regularly divorced. The palatine took another wife immediately, but the countess preserved her independence for the rest of her life.

The first use she made of it was to visit Italy. Admiration of the fine arts made her linger for nearly a year at Rome, and for six months at Florence; after which, from a curiosity of another description, she came to visit Paris. The language and the literature of France were familiar to her; and she longed to inspect narrowly a nation at once warlike and witty, trifling and formidable, whose name, during every period of history, has been famous throughout the world, and which was then making the continent tremble with the terror of its arms: it was at the period of Napoleon's marriage with Maria Louisa that she arrived in the capital of France. The countess was then

in the splendour of her youth and beauty; and her understanding was not less excellent than her figure was fascinating. The dignitary who had in charge to arrange the household of the new empress, offered her the situation of lady in waiting, well assured that Bonaparte, with whose views on Poland he was acquainted, would approve of such a choice; but she cut short the negotiation by a reply not less proud than dignified—

"I am the wife and the daughter of a nobleman—I will not become a servant."

This expression was not reported to the emperor, who would not have passed it over. He knew her personally, and he had displayed a marked respect for her from the period of a long conversation that he had had with her at one of his drawing-rooms. It was after that

conversation that he was heard to observe—"That fierce Sarmatian has the soul of a man:" a high compliment from a prince who knew nothing of gallantry, and who expressed on all occasions, and without periphrasis, his opinion of the comparative inferiority of the female sex. The judgment formed by the countess of Bonaparte was so just and so concise, that its express terms have not been forgotten. "'Tis a pity," said she, "that he lacks generosity; he would be a hero else." We are inclined to believe that impartial posterity will come to the same conclusion as the Countess Gradiska; but our object in giving it here is to elucidate *her* character, not *his*. In her person the countess was tall and elegantly formed; but what specially distinguished her among her fair countrywomen was the dignity of her presence;

in respect of which, she might have been worthily described in the words of Virgil, *Incessu patuit dea.*

The sentiment that her appearance generally inspired, was admiration mingled with respect. The regularity of her features left nothing to be desired; and yet the statuary would rather have taken her for a model than the painter for a study. The expression of her countenance was pensive and thoughtful; and an attentive observer might have marked in the slight, but distinctly defined depression between her eyebrows, the traces of habitual reflection. The natural expression of her eyes was sweet merely; but when she became animated, they flashed with all the lightning of genius.

Nature, by a special favour, had granted her an exception from the failings of her sex: she was neither vain, envious, nor giddy; and,

what is even more extraordinary, she was indifferent to dress, and despised coquetry as a girlish amusement unworthy of a woman of understanding. The victories to which she aspired were indeed of a more elevated character; and wholly occupied with high political interests, and seeking to influence the destinies of nations, she aimed less at touching hearts than ruling minds.

The energy of her soul was not less remarkable than her understanding was comprehensive: her resolutions were strong and steady; and having once pledged her word, no sacrifice ever kept her from redeeming it. Naturally generous and beneficent, she despised money; and she had contracted a taste for magnificence, from the almost eastern habits of the great lords of her native country; but she was far, like many of them, from allowing it to

draw her into wasteful or ridiculous expenses, that could only terminate in the abandonment of character: her pride not less than her prudence made her an economist. To those who observed the air of indifference with which the countess contemplated occurrences to which the common run of people attach so much importance, she appeared cold even to insensibility; but the change that the recital of a generous or noble action operated on her countenance was miraculous. Her eye sparkled with heavenly fire; her cheek flushed, and her whole soul seemed filled with the sentiments that had prompted the act which she was admiring. Once, and once only, she yielded to the influence of love. During her first residence at Rome, among the host of adorers whose homage her beauty attracted, she had singled out a young Swede of superior under-

standing and splendid courage; but the instant she discovered that the dignity of his sentiments did not correspond to the nobleness of his figure, her nascent affection passed away, without leaving any more trace of its existence than the flame that is severed by the sword does on the polish of the steel. Soon after this, indeed, another passion, the love of her country, absorbed the whole faculties of her soul; and Poland, her native land, trampled under foot and parcelled out among strangers, was thenceforth the constant subject of her thoughts.

"Alas!" exclaimed she, with a republican eloquence worthy of a matron of Sparta or of Rome; "is it then true that the descendants of the fierce Sarmatians, of those warriors by whom Vienna was saved and Moscow conquered, now bend under the yoke of Austria

and of Russia? And, to fill up the measure of our humiliation, has Prussia, our vassal, a province dependant on our crown, taken a part in the bloody spoliations of our conquerors? Save that of the dispersed and expatriated Jews, there exists not in the world a fate so forlorn as ours! Had the chances of war compelled us to submit to the arms of a victorious enemy, a general and spontaneous insurrection might have burst our chains. The history of the Genoese, and their expulsion of the Austrians, may show us what, in such circumstances, a small and weak people can effect. But they retained their integrity as a state! What can our now disunited and disintegrated fragments effect? Their most energetic movements are but the convulsive throes that the galvanic pile excites in the members of an inanimate corpse!"

Such were the patriotic complaints of the countess: but her character was not one that exhausts itself in sterile wishes; for while there remained the slightest shadow of success, resignation appeared in her eyes an inexcusable act of cowardice. Feeble therefore as were her hopes, she had never renounced them. It is true she did not participate in the illusion of many of her countrymen when, seduced by the fallacious promises of Napoleon, they imagined that they beheld in him the restorer of their independence; and when he fell, she applauded the dispensation as a just punishment of his unmeasured ambition and heartless perfidy. At the restoration of the monarchy she indulged a hope that the deliverance of Europe would bring with it the deliverance of her country; but that hope was speedily abandoned. The Holy Alliance, even while proscribing

future partitions, confirmed by their sanction those that had already taken place; and they went farther in their contempt of sacred rights, when, despite of the lawful appeals of an alarmed people, they offered up the republic of Genoa as a living sacrifice to a chimerical balance of power, the nature of which it was impossible for the most acute to discover.

After such an abuse of their power, how was it possible to expect the re-establishment of Poland from the generosity of the allied sovereigns? It was evident that there remained no chance for that unhappy country, but in such a universal rising as should shake the thrones and rouse up the nations of Europe, and once more put all their interests on the hazard of the throw. But what were to be the disorders! what the wars! what the calamities of every

kind that must infallibly result from such a moral earthquake! Humanity shuddered at the bare contemplation of them. But no consideration of such probable mischiefs could check the countess; who beholding in the whole world but one subject worthy of regard, and that subject her country, was resolved to brave all chances for the purpose of serving it. She did not shut her eyes to the difficulties nor the dangers of the task; but she was determined to risk her fortune, her repose, her life, if called on; and the greatness of the sacrifice that she was prepared to make silenced every scruple that she might otherwise have felt in respect to the morality of its object:—an error, by-the-bye, which is extremely common to persons of bold and enterprising disposition, who are constantly disposed to imagine that the dangers which accompany their projects can

bestow legality even on those that common justice disavows.

As soon as the Countess Gradiska had taken this extreme resolution, she began to look on herself as in a position of hostility with all established governments; and bending her morality to her inclinations, she bestowed on herself, if we may so express it, general letters of marque against them, from the idea that any thing was allowable provided it annoyed the enemy. She began by a rigid examination of the elements of discord and revolution that existed in different countries of Europe; and she did not fail to discover that, in spite of the longing for repose which is generally perceptible after agitations so long continued, there were every where to be found a number of individuals whose interests or whose hopes had suffered by its creation, and who ardently

wished for the destruction of the existing order of things. These she perceived to exist in different proportions in different countries, and she saw that they were no where more numerous than in Italy, where, as every information tended to show, they were ripe for revolution. It was in Italy that the countess had passed the first two or three years which succeeded the congress of Vienna. She visited first Venice, then Milan, Rome, and Naples; in all of which cities the result of her observations was uniform,—that in that fine country the governments of the various states were not tyrannical, and therefore were not hated; but that of the whole of them the administration was weak and lightly esteemed, in consequence of the ultra notions of liberty unfortunately cherished by the very small proportion of the community that had either skill or means to judge of them.

In the north the leaden sceptre of Cimbria weighed down the Lombards; and the harshness of her Teutonic forms seemed so much the more intolerable, that the amenity of the French had in some measure atoned for their injuries: but apart from this local feeling, the general sentiment that pervaded the peninsula was a longing for independence, and a desire to shake off the yoke imposed on it by foreigners. The re-establishment of the integrity of Italy once presented to the imagination, along with all that train of glorious recollections which the grandeur and power of ancient Rome inspired, it may be easily conceived how such a noble but chimerical anticipation might seduce the hearts of the generous, and convert the most peacefully disposed into the boldest of innovators. But were it to be truly inferred from this general

concurrence of opinion, and from the small energy of the Italian governments, that the latter were destined to crumble at the first shock, it would by no means follow that the revolution which was then contemplated was to be either solid or permanent in its results. The Italian character is violent and irascible to madness; but it is as easy to quench as to kindle its fury. Though bold and hardy in a mere tumult, they are soon subdued by the appearance of a disciplined corps; and those who sport with stilettoes tremble at a bayonet. Lastly, which is the most fatal circumstance in the prospects of Italian independence, the regular army of the interior are not less capable of withstanding a foreign force than their unarmed countrymen are of withstanding them. Events have proved this; and such events did not astonish the Countess Gradiska, nor those

who, like the Countess Gradiska, had a thorough knowledge of Italy. A considerable time previous to the Neapolitan revolt she had determined to recross the Alps, convinced that it was in France only there was a chance of finding sufficient intellect and energy, and such a nursery of soldiers, as was requisite for the renovation of Europe.

It was in vain that the patriots of Naples, with whom she had been connected, endeavoured to retain her among them. "Archimedes," said she, one day, in that figurative but unaffected style which marks for the most part an elevated mind, "asked for a fixed point from which to move the world: the point is found—it is at Paris. There must be placed the fulcrum of the lever that is to work the changes we call for; here, the ground is not solid enough: traversed in every direction by vol-

canoes, it contains within it sufficient seeds of combustion, but we walk upon an abyss the while. Should some sudden and terrible shock cast down all that at present stands fast, what fruit would the present generation of men derive from the work of destruction? They would be swallowed up or ruined; and how many ages must pass away until the lava stream became fit for vegetation, or a crop covered its surface?"

On her arrival in Paris, the countess adopted a judicious plan of conduct, and one in perfect accordance with the dignity of her character. Steering a middle course between the extremes of imprudence and dissimulation, she refused to meet, unless in secret, the members of committee, the director, or the heads of the liberals, to whom she had letters; but at the same time, even in high society, instead of applauding

declamation in favour of arbitrary power, which was then so much the fashion among persons of the court and of fashionable life, she used to ask with an air of wonder, how it had happened that the ancient *régime*, so much boasted of and so deeply regretted, had not strength, sufficient strength, to maintain its position.

One circumstance gave her great facilities in preserving that kind of seeming neutrality, which concealed the most active measures of hostility against the government. She happened to be resident in Warsaw when Louis XVIII. was there in 1801. She was then very young (she was not quite eighteen); but she was already distinguished by her beauty and her wit, and was considered one of the principal ornaments of the capital of Poland. The little French court testified their gratitude towards her, for the lively and open indignation that

she manifested on the occasion of a cowardly attempt, which had nearly succeeded, to poison the august exile. The prince also knew the countess personally; he had often met her at the table of her aunt, the Lady Grand-Marshal of Lithuania; and he had been affected by the marked deference that she paid to him, compared with the habitual boldness of her manners and language. The homage which she felt a pride in rendering to the venerable chief of the Bourbons sprung out of the feeling of commiseration naturally excited in a noble mind by the misfortunes of royalty; but it was easy for Louis to confound that exalted sentiment with the attachment of party, which so many strangers displayed towards his cause; and she was indebted to this mistaken notion for the kindness that the emigrants constantly showed her, both during the exile or after the restoration: a

kindness which protected her moreover from the suspicions, to which the connexions that she had formed in Italy with men whose opinions were more than suspected might have subjected her. When her conduct was casually blamed, she was invariably excused on the ground of her attachment to the arts and literature; for it was a fatal singularity of the times, that the most forward of the advocates of revolutionary novelty were the artists, the scholars, the wits,—in a word, the whole of the intellectual men of the peninsula.

In France, her interviews with those persons who in mutual concord with her were labouring to overthrow the government, were conducted with the utmost secrecy; and they generally took place at the nursery to which we adverted at the commencement of this chapter, and of which a Polish gardener was

the proprietor. This man's name was Riuski; he was born on the lands of the family of Sobiuski, and was the son of the head gardener of the *château*. At a very early age, the uncle of the countess, having found him an intelligent lad, took him into his service, and made him his attendant during his travels. Riuski ever after continued attached to the count's household. With him he boldly shared all the dangers of the civil war that followed the famous confederation of Bar: of which patriotic league, worthy of more success than it met with, the Count Sobiuski was one of the chiefs. When it was put down, the latter, with many of his companions in misfortune, came to Paris, where he sought, in the bustling life of a voluptuous capital, to find relief against the melancholy thoughts which the subjection of his country inspired. The sacred fire of liberty

was not however quenched in his noble soul, and he was on the eve of rejoining the illustrious Kosciusko, when a mortal disease seized his frame. He was not forgetful in his last will of his faithful servant: he left Riuski a considerable sum, which he laid out in the purchase of a bit of marsh-ground in the Faubourg St. Marceau, on which he again betook himself to the occupation of his fathers; and his business was in a prosperous condition when the countess arrived at Paris. That lady took a strong interest in the brave man who, in more than one rencontre, had hazarded his life to defend that of her kinsman; and, with her wonted generosity, she advanced to him funds to purchase a piece of land that was required to enlarge his garden. This service affected Riuski deeply; but had she wished to command his utmost services, or to dispose of his life,

[illegible] of personal gratitude for [illegible]. He entertained towards her, or [illegible] prepared for her family, that kind of [illegible] devotedness, of which the traces have ceased to be perceptible in the western states of Europe ever since the destruction of the feudal system, unless perhaps amongst the mountain clans in the Highlands of Scotland, or among the slaves of an indulgent master in the Antilles. The sort of dependence to which we allude is absolute, and the submission it inculcates is blind: and yet the yoke which might appear so heavy, is not the less ardently cherished.

There can be no question that this sentiment, which is one of great force and of absolute permanency, springs out of the servile condition of those who entertain it; yet, notwithstanding the baseness of its origin, it is

impossible not to acknowledge that its elements are both noble and interesting. Far from being inspired by fear or by interest, it inspires into its possessors a courage that despises all sacrifices, that braves all dangers, and that not unfrequently participates of genuine heroism.

The countess disposed of the house of Riuski as its absolute mistress; she did not even deem it necessary to inform him of the motives that induced her to do so; she merely commanded him to be secret as to what passed there, well knowing that she would be more faithfully served in that respect by her old servant, than if she had committed her important charge to the keeping of the most illustrious hands, though influenced both by the principles of honour and the feelings of friendship.

CHAPTER IX.

THE young man, whom the Countess Gradiska had come to the mansion of the nursery-man for the purpose of visiting, has as yet been known to our readers under the name of Noirval; but it is now time to inform them of what they must ere this have suspected, that he had assumed a fictitious name only to escape from the inquiries of which he was the object. Hitherto appearances have presented him under rather a disagreeable aspect; but, before

proceeding to his condemnation, it is but just to make due allowance for the extraordinary circumstances that decided his fate. They are not devoid of interest, insomuch as they connect themselves with events of no mean importance. In giving an account of them, we shall not, though entering on our task at considerable length, seek to extenuate his faults; we shall detail facts with all the impartiality that History has a right to demand, although the historian but rarely obeys her behests. It is not unlikely, after being made acquainted with the irresistible fatality which at last sunk this unfortunate young man in the abyss of ruin, that, notwithstanding his passionate violence, which was, however, redeemed by a noble and generous nature, and by qualities of the heart as high in their order as were the endowments of his understanding, the reader will be inclined

to conclude that he was as much victim of his ill fortune as of his crimes.

Count Jerome de la Cesia was a descendant of one of the most ancient families in Lombardy; the principal property of his house was however situated in Piedmont. Left an orphan at an early age, he was reared under the tutelage of his uncle, an old general in the army of Sardinia; and by him he was placed in the college of Pavia. Nature had bestowed on young Cesia a wonderfully retentive memory, and not less judicious than retentive: his progress in every department of study was great, and he soon left most of his fellow-competitors behind him. He excelled in bodily as much as in mental exercises; and from his boldness, activity, and vigour, he was the leader in every sport, and in every enterprise that asked for its accomplishment, either courage or address.

In consequence of these qualifications, he soon gained over his companions that species of authority, which is almost involuntarily yielded to acknowledged merit, whenever it is found in an energetic and impetuous character. It must be admitted, at the same time, that he had more abettors than friends, for he was eager to master it on all occasions; jealous of the slightest contradiction, and never forgave the smallest offence. His ardour and perseverance in defending those who declared for him, and whose interests he maintained with even more warmth than he did his own, were, it must be added, as great as was the opposition he displayed towards his enemies.

At the age of eighteen De la Cesia had passed through the whole of the classics; he was intimately conversant with Latin and Greek, and French he knew as familiarly as

his native tongue; his progress in mathematics had not been so great as his uncle, who had served with approbation in the engineers, and who intended that his nephew should also be a member of that corps, desired. The artillery of Piedmont, we may remark, has at all times been excellent. The wishes of the young count were not in accordance with those of his relation: his lively and brilliant imagination rendered the dryness of the exact sciences a subject of invincible repugnance to him: he was, besides, fond of horses, and had become a skilful sword-player under the tuition of an able master; an art that requires as much power as activity: he therefore requested a commission in the cavalry in preference; but, as his request was not backed by his uncle, it met with a refusal. From that moment he renounced the profession of arms; and shortly

after he left Pavia for Naples, in order to arrange some pecuniary affairs with a relation of his mother, who held an important office at that court.

Rome lay in his way, and he stopped there for some time. The splendour of its modern edifices affected him less than the magnificence of its ancient remains. Those imposing ruins, which attest to all times the greatness of the former masters of the world, redoubled the zeal that he felt for the cause of liberty, the sacred source of so many wonders and so much power; and he vowed in the bottom of his heart, and he registered the solemn vow in an ode which became highly popular, that he would devote himself to her holy cause. His talent for lyric poetry was indeed great; and though his lines were not without faults, yet the fire, energy and elevation of thought that

they displayed, and the sublimity to which they not unfrequently rose, more than redeemed their defects. Such at least was the opinion of one of the strangers then at Rome —we mean Lord Byron, at that time a very young man, but whose nascent fame nevertheless had already attracted great attention; who, notwithstanding his retiring character, was anxious to be introduced to the author of a poem for whom he felt a secret attachment, founded on a similarity of character that was very strongly marked.

Cesia, indeed, as was his lordship, was full of noble sentiments, often degenerating into pride: he had the same bold and comprehensive but irregular intellect; the same contempt of common prejudices, pushed to the neglect even of customary decencies; the same bold scepticism in respect of matters the most sacred;

and both these presumptuous young men, by a very ordinary mistake, had confounded a passion for absolute and unmodified independence, which is an unattainable chimera, with the worship of genuine and practicable freedom. There was, however, an important distinction in their respective tempers, arising perhaps out of the different elements in which they had been born and reared. Both were keenly susceptible of insult; but, in Lord Byron, a dignified feeling of contempt speedily quenched all purpose of revenge. The Italian, on the contrary, was as implacable as he was vindictive, and he sought to justify the permanency of his resentment by maintaining, that he who could forget an insult, was incapable of being grateful for a favour.

Lord Byron, at the time of which we are treating, was on the eve of setting out for

Greece, where a few years afterwards he was destined to terminate his career, and he was anxious for the count to accompany him thither. The latter declined the invitation with regret on account of indispensable business which detained him at Naples, but he promised that the moment it was expedited he would join his friend.

It was in the capital of the Two Sicilies that Cesia first united himself with the heads of the famous Carbonari, who have for so long a time agitated Italy and disquieted the whole of Europe. The object at first was both just and legal;—it was limited to the relieving of the country from the hypocritical tyranny of Napoleon. The organization was powerfully and skilfully combined; but it was with sorrow that the young count perceived that fanaticism and superstition were the principal springs of

their political association; and yet, what other means could be found for stimulating or alluring a people at once credulous and fearful? He had now been about six months in Naples, and no prospect of a grand movement had yet presented itself; and the private business which had attracted him thither was far from being terminated. Wearied out therefore with the tardy progress of both, he invested a celebrated lawyer with full powers to settle the latter; and influenced by a passion for travel, the first longing of superior minds, he left his friends to settle the former, while he passed the Alps for the purpose of visiting Switzerland and the north of Germany.

This was in the commencement of 1813. The terrible Russian campaign had decimated the armies of France, and given to the long-oppressed Germans an opportunity, and

[illegible] with a view of recovering that [illegible] which they had fought but feebly to defend. For more than two years previous, the youth in the states of the Rhenish confederation, secret societies under the direction of bold and skilful leaders had been preparing men's minds for the struggle. The principal focus of these patriotic clubs was in the great universities, to which, from time immemorial, thousands of young men from all parts of the country were in the habit of having recourse for the finishing of their education. The professors were indeed at the head of the plots. They substituted in lieu of the ordinary course of ectures a species of instruction which every age listens to with avidity—the doctrine of resistance to oppression; they exhibited a revolt against the French as a moral obligation, and insurrection as the most imperious of duties. There was

on this occasion no scruple to alarm their timorous consciences: their object was not an attack on legitimate government: on the contrary, by overthrowing the existing tyranny, they delivered at once the sovereign from his thraldom, and restored independence to the subject. What noble and powerful motives to action!—to avenge insulted national honour —to punish humiliating and harassing domination—to place the lawful crown once more on the head of its virtuous and venerated owner! So impelled, it may be supposed the unanimity of the German scholars was equal to their zeal. The moment that the signal was given, the warlike and enthusiastic youth rose as one man, threw aside their books, and rushing to arms, hurried along with them by their patriotic example the whole population both of the country and of the town. That rising forms a solitary

feature in history; never before had men treading the peaceful walks of literature, grave doctors, whose appointed task it was to moderate the violence and to restrain the headlong passions of youth, been seen changing all at once their sedate profession, stimulating the ardour of their disciples, and combating and conquering at their head.

It is a very old observation, and one of which every day's experience proves the truth, that in all grand popular movements there exists a communicative power, as real as it is inexplicable, which influences the spectators to take an active part in the events of which they are witnesses. This species of attractive sympathy, which springs doubtless out of the spirit of imitation common to all animated nature, is sometimes so powerful as to subjugate the will, and to suspend the exercise of reflection; and

such was the feeling that young Cesia experienced in the contemplation of that tumultuous agitation of an entire people intoxicated with hope, and on the eve of snatching back their plundered rights. Too keenly affected to remain inactive while the struggle for liberty was at hand, the count determined to become the associate of so glorious an enterprise: he requested admission into the battalion of Berlin students; and his lofty presence, his fine figure, and his martial air, notwithstanding his foreign birth, procured him an immediate and pressing welcome. In a very short time his superior intelligence and enterprising zeal gained for him the confidence of the chiefs of the party. He served in the foremost rank of the grenadiers in the memorable battle in which the French, who were menacing the city of the great Frederic for the second time, were finally

repulsed. The action was warm and murderous; repeated bayonet charges took place during its continuance; and recruits without discipline—the young Prussians we mean, found in their exalted patriotism a courage and power that enabled them to resist those formidable veterans who had triumphed over the most warlike legions of Europe. In the midst of the *mélée*, Cesia, who was active as he was bold, had the good fortune to save the life of his captain. The captain was a professor more skilled in handling the pen than in handling the sword; but the exploit cost the count dear, for he received a severe wound, which for several days placed his life in danger. One of the young princes of Prussia, who was witness of this brave action, untied the iron cross from his neck, and presented it to the young Italian, along with the brevet of a

commission; but the count accepted of the former only; and taking advantage of an opportunity when he could retire with honour, he quitted the army never more to join it. It was not that his principles were changed, but his warlike ardour was effectually cooled. Who is there that in the heyday of his youth has not felt the seductive influence of a military habit; the magical effects of a brilliant uniform of splendid arms; and above all, of those warlike airs, those spirit-stirring marches, which rouse, electrify, and agitate young hearts? But once in the army, once fairly in the field, how numerous are the discomforts! Toil, bad weather, the listless and wearisome bivouac, privations of every description; and for those who love reading and study, that worst of all privations, want of books, to say nothing of the petty details of a subduing and monotonous

service, that soon serve to render disgustful a career, which at first sight presented nothing but danger, and the laurel crown by which it is followed. It was not these causes alone that determined La Cesia to quit the standard of the coalition. In his leisure moments, and when meditating on the morality of his undertaking, he had put the question to his conscience, and that severe judge had told him that nothing could justify the shedding of blood but a case of legitimate defence. This idea, which is so conformable to the precepts of natural justice, had presented itself to his mind on more than one occasion from the opening of the campaign, but it excited scruples that terminated in nothing. It required for his conviction some stronger argument, and the pain resulting from his wound finished what philosophy had begun: we are seldom truly sensible of our faults until

we suffer from their consequences. The remainder of the year had elapsed before the count's recovery was completed. In the following summer he quitted Berlin for Vienna, where he arrived at the moment when the allied sovereigns, on their return from the memorable march to Paris, had assembled in congress to lay down rules for the future regulation of Europe. His noble birth gave him admission to the highest circles of that capital, where nobility alone can enter; and his merits and his agreeable manners rendered him a favourite when introduced. It was at this period that he became acquainted with the Countess Gradiska, whose beauty he admired, and whose elevation of sentiment and comprehensiveness of understanding gained an entire conquest over him. He then for the first time imagined that the dreams of his

imagination were about to be realised; that he had at length found in one and the same person that miraculous combination of perfections of every kind which he considered alone worthy of his homage, and which he had hitherto sought in vain. He attached himself in consequence to the countess, and seriously laboured to gain not less her love than her esteem. She was flattered by his attentions. She was wont to receive with a sort of disdainful indifference such as was paid to her by the idle young men that abound in all great towns, with whom gallantry is their sole business, and who make seduction their trade; but she had too much discernment to confound the noble Italian with such. The qualities that distinguished him, his superiority of judgment, his brilliant and fertile imagination, his settled and delicate taste, all these she could justly appreciate; and

her interest in him increased when she perceived the grandeur of his views and the constancy of his character. There was besides between them that conformity of opinions and of sentiments on things essential, which predisposes to friendship: in perfect accordance on political topics, both were passionate lovers of freedom; both detested absolute power; and both equally detested equality. The latter system they considered to be alien to human nature, which, in creating differences so palpable both in the moral and physical world, could never have intended, they concluded, to bestow on mankind a perfect parity of rights. They allowed that justice required that these rights should not be abused any more by superiority of talents than by superiority of physical power; but they contended against the absurdity of permitting an ignorant person or a fool

to have a legal right of administering the affairs of state, when it was obvious that, in order to direct such complicated matters aright, so much knowledge and so much talent were absolutely requisite. This doctrine may be disputed, and probably will be for a long time to come; and we may add, that should mankind at any future period agree as to its principles, the probability is that as many new discussions will arise out of the mode of their application. We pretend not to settle these weighty matters; it is enough for us to observe that greater concessions could hardly be expected from a grandee of Poland whose lands were cultivated by serfs, and from a feudal lord who but a short time before had still retained his vassals. The prejudices of our birth, the mode of our education, our position in society, all tend, without our perceiving it,

to modify the sentiments and opinions of the most generous hearts and the most comprehensive understandings. Whatever justice there may be found in the common observation in respect of the Italian count and the Polish countess, what was probable did not fall out. A reciprocal esteem produced, it is true, a very intimate connexion between them; but love had no part in their intimacy; and for the simple reason, that there existed not between them that secret and inexplicable sympathy which binds the heart, and not unfrequently the reason, according to its capricious will. This the countess declared to La Cesia with the frankness that characterised her; adding, "I know that you deserve an undivided attachment, and my affection towards my country is such that I cannot offer you but the second place in my affections." Cesia had too much

mind not to forget his love when the proffer was so refused at the same time that the enthusiasm of the countess in favour of freedom kindled anew all his ancient ardour in the pursuit of it. He entered into a league, determined to serve along with her that cause which in both their eyes had latterly triumphed but by halves. They mutually swore fidelity to each other, assumed the endearing titles of brother and sister, and, we may add, that never was any connexion formed by friendship tenderer nor more durable. From that moment they hardly ever omitted each other's company; and the public, which was completely deceived as to the nature of their connexion, set it down as a matter of certainty that it was a love intrigue that bound them, as it had bound so many before them. A small portion of the community, not so much given to be the dupes of their

neighbours, seeing them both free, both equal in birth, and in every respect suited to each other, both in fortune and years, imagined that they had entered into a marriage which they did not find convenient to declare. But the affectionate dignity on the one hand, that the countess maintained towards him, and on the other the behaviour of Cesia towards her, which were too cold for a lover, too tender for a husband, in a short time completely bewildered their conjectures.

In the mean time, mighty events were succeeding each other with rapidity. Napoleon had left the island, but two days' sail from our coasts, and close to those of Italy, to which he had been so inconsiderately relegated; the torrent of the hundred days had swept over France; the allied sovereigns, who had scarce got over the terror caused by the sudden over-

[illegible] of that restriction which they had be[illegible] to be set free by treaties, had drawn [illegible] the bonds of their union. Conquerors [illegible] Waterloo, their only consideration was to [illegible] against [illegible] attacks, [illegible] exempt; and [illegible] undefined [illegible] promises made [illegible] general [illegible] In respect [illegible] previously [illegible] Venice, [illegible] they were for once [illegible] independent [illegible] Europe was [illegible] that [illegible] their [illegible] not to deprive themselves of any [illegible] for

whatever was given up, it would not fail to augment the power of the revolutionists. Strengthened by such reasonings, there was nothing that did not seem allowable and legitimate; for it is well known that the morality of courts, like the religion of hypocrites, is of a very accommodating character.

In this state of things the countess determined to quit Vienna, where her stay was useless, so far as the accomplishment of her grand projects was concerned; and she accordingly set out for Italy, whither La Cesia accompanied her. He had at first thought of visiting Prussia, where liberal ideas were more widely diffused, and of a much higher order than in the south of Germany, and where the connexions that he had kept up had assured him that a portion of the army even had been shaken; but he saw that these plans were not

sufficiently extended or matured to offer any present prospect of success: while in Naples and in Lombardy, and even in Piedmont, the revolutionary party was much more intimately bound together, and the time much more opportune. It was in Italy therefore that, in concert with his friend, he set himself to labour with as much activity as perseverance to insure the success of a conspiracy, to the extent of whose ramifications the recollections of mankind have preserved no parallel. In fact, it extended from Cadiz to Edinburgh; and passing through Paris, it touched Berlin in the north, and Vesuvius in the south. In the east it penetrated Poland; and the insurrection which, about the same period, broke out in the Russian guards, proved that it was not unfelt even in the most remote and isolated quarters. It forms no part of our plan to give a detail of

the great events of that memorable period of incredible and short-lived success to the revolutionists. Nor shall we attempt to describe the sombre and threatening aspect that the political horizon at that period presented: Spain in flames, from the Pyrenees to the Columns of Hercules: the whole of the middle of Italy in a state of insurrection: England agitated by the plans of the radicals; and her unbridled population, in their blind fury, breaking and destroying those machines which constituted her wealth; while others, associating in thousands under the name of "Blanketeers," were marching on the alarmed capital: Germany, where fanaticism was whetting the knives of devoted assassins: France covered with plots, insulated it is true, but all having relation to a common centre—the malcontents in the east scarcely disguising their criminal exultation—

the army doubtful—the administration irresolute and disunited—the monarch feeble and dying: in a word, that vague but universally diffused uneasiness which, like the wind that precedes the storm, announced some mighty but undefined commotion. It will be the task of the historian to represent to our descendants those scenes of a drama so replete with change, the denouement of which was at length happily brought about by the famous discharge of artillery on the Bidassoa. Our task is limited to the description of the part that La Cesia took in these events. He was at Naples when the revolution broke out. He was connected with the chiefs of the patriotic band; and yet he was astonished at the smallness of the effort necessary for the completion of the insurrectionary movement that overturned the absolute government there. The Spanish constitution,

which was known only by name, was proclaimed without opposition; only that in lieu of cortès, a parliament was summoned that exercised supreme authority. The capital, the provinces, were equally submissive; yet was the discontent universal, though the numerous lodges of the Carbonari, under the direction of a central committee (*alta vendita*), stopped short, by the terror they inspired, the expression of the popular dislike; and no opposition presented itself to the armed force at their command, except on the opposite side of the Straits. But though, contemplated from within, the Neapolitan revolution appeared sufficiently consolidated, from without a powerful enemy had sworn its destruction. Austria judged well that her dominion in Italy would be imminently compromised, should any thing like liberty be established in a powerful neighbouring kingdom;

and the statesmen who directed her councils decided that it was essential at all hazards to destroy in the bud this evil example. It was with this view that the congress of Laybach was summoned; and with this view did Austria seek to inspire into the allied monarchs her own fears, while she was assembling a powerful army in her hereditary dominions in order to put down their cause. In the mean time, the forces which Naples had to oppose to her were by no means despicable, at least in point of numbers. Fifty-four thousand soldiers, all well disciplined, had assembled under the regular standard of the revolutionists; and there were not less than seventy thousand of militia to guard the passes of the precipitous mountains which divide the middle of Italy from the one sea to the other. There were besides several battalions of volunteers; some bearing the name

of Brutii, others of Hirpini, and others of Samnites, names famous in the pages of history, but which, when so misapplied, only rendered more conspicuous the weakness of those that had adopted them. In spite of these elements of resistance, Cesia was far from feeling assured when he considered the incredible weakness which those same troops had displayed under the command of the notorious Mack, and still more recently, when no less than eighty thousand Neapolitans had fled and disbanded before an enemy very inferior in numbers, notwithstanding every effort of their king, a soldier of fortune, but whose talents, it is true, were not at all equal to his courage. He concluded that the only means of preserving independence in the south of Italy was to produce a diversion in the north formidable enough to alarm Austria, and to confine her efforts to the safety of her

own possessions. Such a measure was a bold, but by no means a rash one: the following details will enable our readers to form a judgment of it. Authentic information had recently been received from Turin by La Cesia, that the Piedmontese army, still animated with that military ardour which had given it the foremost rank in the armies of Napoleon of all the nations that he had treated with or subjugated, consisted of more than sixty thousand effective men, comprehending in that number those contingents which were bound to join immediately on being summoned: and that out of this number not more than eight days would be required to bring at least twenty thousand into the field, fully equipped for a campaign, and properly supplied with artillery. Now were this vanguard, it was concluded, to pass the Tesino, and to advance by forced

marches on the Milanese, where the garrisons had been imprudently reduced, it was obvious that they would drive every thing before them, pass the Adda and the Mincio unopposed, mask Mantua and the whole line of the Adige. It was admitted that an isolated division could not maintain themselves for any length of time in so advanced a position, but the mass of the Piedmontese army would speedily join; and besides, it was more than probable that the population of those provinces which bore with most impatience the yoke of the Austrians would join their deliverers. Could such an insurrection be pushed as far as Venice, then the whole of Italy was saved. There is no military man who is ignorant that that great city, which in the midst of her impregnable *lagunes* could never have fallen but by an act of political suicide, possesses the

right of a position, of which Genoa, which within her triple line of defence could maintain an entire army, holds the left; while the higher Alps, stretching along the whole of the frontier with their icy ridges, form a natural rampart against the incursions of barbarians. "Yes," cried the count, in a fit of patriotic enthusiasm, "five millions of Italians from the left bank of the Po, incited and exasperated by oppression, may still brave the descendants of the Huns and of the Goths.

"But in the mean time no time is to be lost," he went on: "the Austrians are in full march: it will no longer be time to assume the defensive, if you once allow them to conquer and subjugate the lively and irascible but energetic population of the middle provinces, whose hearts and whose courage a voluptuous climate has softened and enervated."

Such was his language to his associates; and next day he set out in order to hasten the explosion of the insurrectional movement that was preparing in Piedmont, where he knew the fermentation to be extreme. The intention manifested by Austria to employ her influence in the other cabinets, and, if need required, to place Naples by force under the yoke of despotism, had roused against that power the anger of every friend of national independence; but when the stipulations which the emperor imposed on the kings of Sardinia and of the Two Sicilies not to grant any concession to their subjects, were made known, the exasperation surpassed all bounds. Here was in fact an Austrian monarch seeking to rivet the chains of Italy, while at the same time he treated her princes as his vassals. Thus every man regarded him as a personal enemy, who was to be op-

posed to the design. In order to execute so hazardous a project, all the whole disposable power of the people was indispensable, and the concurrence of the existing government was therefore indispensable; yet as it was foreseen that the monarch would not voluntarily consent to adopt those measures against his ancient ally it was determined to proceed without his consent, and the insurrection was in consequence decided. The rising would have been universal if they had complied with the wishes of the ardent reformers, who were anxious for the triumph of pure democracy, and were not deterred by a similar attempt to that which had cost France, and without the slightest advantage, so many tears and so much blood.

Happily this party was the less numerous that the king was generally beloved and re-

spected, and the immense majority of his subjects in consequence were not unwilling to continue his power under restrictions analogous to those that had been adopted in other states. Of the constitutions to which they looked for a model, that of the English had in its favour the advantage of long and glorious experience; but the young officers who had entered into the conspiracy, and who, being masters of the soldiers, were masters also of every decision that was come to, preferred the work of the Spanish army, whose conduct they imitated, to any thing in the nature of mere political combination. Besides, that constitution had been adopted at Naples; and a conformity in that respect appeared likely to contribute to the success of the Italian federation. The consequence was, that the liberals, who desired a pure republic, refused to expose themselves to

the caprice of a parcel of inconsiderate youths, as they were well aware how precarious an affair representative monarchy must be when not strengthened by its indispensable prop, a chamber of peers.

While Cesia was traversing the Roman states and Tuscany, on his route to Turin, the insurrection burst simultaneously forth in various points of the Sardinian territory. On arriving at Alexandria, he saw floating above the formidable ramparts of that citadel, before which so many thousands have perished, the tri-coloured flag of green, red, and blue, the ancient colours of the kingdom of Italy, and the index of the object at which the insurgents aimed. The count halted but a few hours, for the purpose of conferring with the officers of the revolted garrison, and then pursued his route to the capital; in which, and not in the

provinces, the fate of states is ordinarily decided. The position of Piedmont, at this critical moment, was extremely singular; nor does History, in all the strange events that she has handed down, present any example precisely analogous. Piedmont had no less than four distinct supreme authorities; between which it was no easy task to select one to whom obedience was a lawful service. The king, Victor Emanuel, who was firm enough to oppose the demands of the insurgents, and too honourable a man not to refuse what he was determined not to grant, yet at the same time without sufficient resolution to embark in a struggle, the issues of which were doubtful, and could not fail to be attended with bloodshed, had abdicated, and in the absence of the natural successor to his throne, had delegated his powers to that prince who, in default of his

brother and himself, was to mount the throne. The Prince of Genoa, the heir-presumptive in question, had not accepted of the succession thus proffered to him, yet had he published a proclamation which in its form had all the authority of a royal decree. At the same time, there was a junta nominated, or rather called imperatively forth, by the voice of the nation, which the power that appointed them compelled the regent to recognise, and which in fact exercised all the functions of the executive. Here were at the same moment two kings, a regent, and a popular committee. It is almost unnecessary to ask what could spring out of such a chaos.

The *dénouement* was not slow in its approach. The wonderful times in which we live, and which are so fertile in extraordinary events, present perhaps no picture more singular than

the submissive apathy of the existing generation to the dominion of the bayonet. In the space of seven years, we mean from 1815 to 1821, no less than four nations had given a memorable example of this scandalous weakness; had allowed those troops that were enrolled and paid to defend the laws as well as the country, to overturn the government, and to do so as unceremoniously as the pretorian bands of old, and in more modern times the Strelitz were wont to do, when deposing an emperor or a czar. Such had been the way in which France, Spain, Naples, and Piedmont, had submitted to be invaded, so to say, and conquered by their own soldiers.

It is true that many individuals who did not belong to the army took an active part in those revolutions, and endeavoured to give them a national colour by holding them forth as the

work of the people. But only let us sum up their numbers, instead of listening to their declamations, and we shall find on the one side millions indifferent or opposed to these schemes; and on the other a few hundreds of students, lawyers, men of letters, and scions of nobility, high in place, or ambitious of being so. Such is the way in which, in the great dramas that are exhibited on the stage of the world, the people are represented. It must be allowed that those who are deceived by it go to the contemplation as they do to that of other plays, with their minds previously made up to be so.

The military insurrection of Piedmont found as few supporters in the nation at large as the soldiers of other countries had; but there was this notable peculiarity in the Sardinian army, that the officers, though quite unanimous in

their resolutions to defend the independence of their country when threatened by Austria, were wholly divided when called on to adopt those extreme measures which circumstances imperiously demanded of them. While some were of opinion that the safety of the country called on them to silence every scruple; many, and in this latter number were all those who had grown old in the army, looked on a revolt against the prince whom they had sworn to defend as a crime which no pretext of public utility could excuse; it was, they argued, as inconsistent with honour, as with their oaths. Such were the sentiments of the governors of provinces, and in general of all the officers of high rank; and by their means many of the garrisons were kept steady to their duty: nay, even in Turin itself, while the citadel was in the hands of the insurgents, the royal carabi-

neers, the household guards, and several other corps, remained steadfast in their loyalty. Affairs were in this perplexing condition when Cesta arrived at Turin. Santa Rosa had just been nominated minister of war; he was one of the most ardent of the revolutionary party, the fellow-countryman of Cesta, and the friend of his youth. This man he was a man of distinguished understanding a warm friend of freedom, and never given to rashness. He had given a project of decree in an order of the day that necessitated which he forbade the army to swear the renunciation of Charles Felix, whose abdicating he remained at Modena in the enemy's territory, could not be deemed valid and by which he promised from the support of France and of Lombardy a help that was not so wholly unexpected as it appeared. His connexion with

the malcontents in the east of France had indeed informed him that a grand movement was in contemplation, which could not fail to promote the revolutionary cause; and, in fact, on the 20th of March, a day of fatal recollections, an insurrection did take place at Grenoble; which, had not the resident authorities shown as much firmness as the soldiers of the garrison, who boldly routed the rebels, showed courage, the former would unquestionably have got possession of the town, and of its castle also. In the Milanese the minds of the public were not less agitated; and so strongly alarmed were the imperial family there, that preparations had actually been made for the departure of the vice-queen; and several bands of federalists and of students of the university of Pavia crossed the Tesino, notwithstanding her vigilance, and proceeded to offer their services

to the Piedmontese junta. These young men assumed the pompous designation of the "Legion of Minerva:" a goddess who, in their classical enthusiasm they were wont to say, presided equally over the arts, over learning, and arms.

Their offers were accepted; they received arms; and Santa Rosa called on his friend Cesta to take the command of a troop utterly unskilled in war, but full of patriotic ardour. The count did justice to their zeal, and he fully participated in their sentiments; but he would have preferred a command of veteran soldiers, well convinced that nothing can compensate for the absence of discipline and that firmness of heart, which experience and the habit of encountering danger can alone bestow: he accepted, however, the charge, from his devotion to the cause.

It was at this period that the junta, in determining to assume the offensive, formed out of all the troops that obeyed their orders a *corps d'armée*, for the purpose of opposing the governor of Novara; who, recognising no other master than Charles Felix, threatened to march upon Turin. It was the more necessary to anticipate the governor's movements, because the news of the check sustained by the Neapolitans under Pepe at Rieti had in a very singular degree raised the courage of the Austrians in the Milanese, and throughout all the districts where revolutionary principles prevailed.

When the insurgent forces were mustered, they amounted to about seven thousand men of every description; but their commanders, calculating confidently on the defection of the royalists, with many of whose officers they were

secretly in treaty, advanced boldly to the walls of Novara. On the 8th of April, in the morning, they drew up within cannon-shot of the ramparts of that town, and were preparing for a vigorous attack, when they were anticipated by a sally of the garrison. At the same moment the corps of Bubna, which had passed the Tesino during the night, unexpectedly showed themselves on the left of the Piedmontese, which they threatened to turn. A retreat was in consequence ordered, and was conducted for some time in perfect order ; but the squadron of dragoons of the queen, which covered the rear, having been driven in by a party of Austrian hussars, the infantry hastily threw down their arms, and the whole immediately disbanding, returned to their homes, and never after dreamed of rejoining their colours. The officers, thus abandoned, took flight in various direc-

tions; some took shipping at Genoa—some passed into Spain—some passed the Alps, and sought shelter in Switzerland; and others sought refuge in France; and in the interim the capital, by its representatives, the senate, sent the keys of the city to the Count de la Tour, the Monk of this revolution. Their example was followed by the submission of the whole kingdom.

So terminated the remarkable episode of the conspiracy of 1821, the Piedmontese insurrection; it fell by a single blow. Had the army been unanimous, the moment was so extremely opportune, that they might not only have delivered the whole of Italy, and kept the Germans for many a year beyond the Alps; but the discord that had insinuated itself into their ranks deprived them of all power and conse-

quence; the great political quarrel of a nation degenerated into a military brawl; and the insurgents, to use a quaint observation of Mirabeau's, did not obtain even the sorry honours of a civil war. De la Cesia commanded the band of youthful federalists in the unhappy affair which we have briefly described; he conducted himself with his accustomed bravery, but fortune was as unkind to him under the walls of Novara as she had been on the plains of Prussia; he had been wounded while fighting at the head of the students of Berlin, and he was now wounded a second time, and much more severely, while attempting to rally the followers of Minerva, whom a charge of cavalry had broken. He was carried off the field, where he had been left for dead, by one of the suttlers; and when he recovered his senses, he

saw no other means of safety than a journey to the neutral and peaceful territory of Switzerland. With great labour and difficulty he succeeded in gaining the grand route of the Simplon above Sesto Calenda, at the place where it begins to run along the Lago Maggiore; but he had not proceeded farther than Arona when excessive fatigue opened his wound again, and he found it impossible to go farther. Happily he found at the foot of the colossus erected to San Carlo Borromeo a fishing-boat, by which he was conveyed to the Austrian port of Laveno. He was, indeed, not more secure there than while under the power of Sardinia; but he entertained hopes of finding an asylum with the Marquis of Varèze, a noble Comoese, and his kinsman, whose country-house was in the neighbourhood of the port; nor was he

deceived. The marquis readily received him; and to his generous care Cesia probably owed his life, though it made him lose his happiness for ever.

CHAPTER X.

THE Marquis Varèze was an old nobleman, who, like many of his countrymen, had never held office, either civil or military. For thirty years his leisure had been consecrated to study, and chiefly to scientific researches into the antiquities of his native town. His literary labours had not been altogether unsuccessful; it was known at Como that he had published two folio dissertations, of local interest, indeed, but not the less esteemed on that account by

the erudite of the province. The French revolution had troubled the peaceful current of his life; nevertheless, from his naturally circumspect and timid character, the marquis had contrived to avoid taking any part in the events that had agitated Italy for the previous twenty years; during the course of which, the principal object of his policy was to escape as much as possible from the heavy impositions which the successive governments and the different invading armies had laid on the more wealthy proprietors. At the establishment of the Cisalpine republic, he lamented the loss of his title; but he was much more sensibly affected in witnessing the pitiless destruction of the armorial bearings that decorated the entrance to his baronial palace. Under the imperial government of France his vanity was somewhat consoled, for the nobility began then to recover a

portion of their consequence: but the interminable succession of wars entered upon by Napoleon deprived them of all security. After Napoleon's fall, he could, it is true, promise to himself the enjoyment of a long peace; but, on the other hand, the taxes were becoming daily more difficult of payment, because the money went regularly to Vienna, and it never returned to enrich the country whence it was drawn. But this common grief was small compared with the continual irritation felt by the Lombards, a polished and ceremonious people, from the roughness of the Austrian *employés*, whose gross and rude manners shocked the delicacy of the nobility, accustomed to the obsequious respect of their fellow-countrymen, and to the politeness of the agents of the old government. Thus, when the Neapolitan revolution broke out, every one put up prayers

for its success; but when Piedmont also rose, not a doubt was entertained that the moment of acquiring an independence so ardently desired had come; and this was the more probable, since the Austrian garrisons, as we have before observed, had been inconsiderately diminished.

Secret associations were formed in every quarter, with a view to co-operate in the great work. The most zealous of the committee of Como was an intimate friend of the marquis, an active and energetic individual, who exercised a powerful and habitual influence over him: yet even he, by all his pressing entreaties, could not prevail on the old man, though he sympathised with their sentiments, to join the conspirators. All that he could obtain, and that was on the express condition that the donor should not be named, was a considerable sum of money destined to pay the

first levies. The supply was not ample enough, and funds were still wanting. Such a case happens not unfrequently, in similar circumstances, even in rich countries; for men are always more ready to venture their heads than to hazard their purses. Their ill-timed parsimony in the present instance, joined to the pusillanimity of some of the heads of the conspiracy, made the revolutionists lose much precious time; and the viceregal archduke, who had already taken measures for abandoning his capital, recovered his courage: the Piedmontese insurrection was put down, and the opportunity was lost to the Lombards for ever.

When the Marquis of Varèze first heard of the defeat at Novara, he was along with his daughter, a young girl of eighteen years of age, of rare merit and exquisite beauty, at Blevio, at a country-house situated on the

banks of the Lake of Como. He perceived at once that the submission of the Piedmontese had decided the fate of Lombardy, and he bitterly repented having yielded to the entreaties of his friend. Already he beheld himself denounced, pursued, condemned, as guilty of high-treason against the emperor. It was while he was a prey to these alarms that he received the billet of Count de la Cesia; and his first movement was to refuse the asylum he requested.

"Read that letter, Thomasine," said he to his daughter, "and judge whether, under my circumstances, I should receive under my roof one of the leaders of the insurgents; people in that case would not scruple to believe that I had been leagued with them."

"Heaven will not permit so benevolent an action to be turned to your prejudice," replied

the young lady; "and were it even so, how could you abandon your own kinsman, and the son of your best friend?"

"True, true," said the marquis, heaving a deep sigh, "it is a matter of duty, as you say, and I must perform it; but if I do receive him here, I foresee the consequences will be terrible."

"Why those melancholy forebodings?" said his daughter, taking affectionately the old man's hand: "how can it be made out a crime to succour a poor wounded man? Common charity calls on us to do as much; and are they not Christians who would reproach us with the performance of so meritorious an act?"

The character of the marquis was feeble and timorous, but he was a humane and good man; and his generous feelings thus appealed to by the exhortations of his daughter, he determined to

receive the count; and he sought at the same time to persuade himself that there was less danger in doing so than he had at first imagined. He immediately despatched a confidential messenger with orders to conduct La Cesia to the *château* with all the care that his condition required. When the servant arrived at Laveno, he found the condition of the young count highly alarming: the heats, which in that climate come on early, had so affected his wounds, that already had gangrenous spots appeared in the cut in his thigh, and the surgeon who dressed it declared that it would require several weeks of absolute repose before he would be able to walk; he even added, that he would in all probability be a cripple for life. Notwithstanding these terrible prognostics, La Cesia having announced his determination to remain no longer in the inn where he had

alighted, he was placed on a litter, and in the evening of the next day he arrived at the palace of the Marquis Varèze. He did not arrive a moment too soon: the excessive fatigue he had undergone, joined to great anxiety of mind and much bodily pain, had rendered his illness very serious; and on the night of his arrival he was seized with a fever of a very violent nature. The first attack was severe, and the patient soon became delirious under its continued influence. On beholding these alarming symptoms, all the other fears of the marquis were absorbed in the danger of his youthful kinsman; he sent express for the most able surgeon that was to be found in the district: he placed himself by the couch of the patient, which, until the crisis was past, he seldom quitted; and his amiable daughter was not less assiduous in her attentions. Thomasine had been reared

in the habit of doing good by a virtuous and charitable mother; and her attentions towards the sick had in them that delicacy and continuousness of which only women have the secret. It seemed, however, as if the disorder were not destined to yield either to attendance or medicine; and on the fifth day it assumed so alarming an aspect, that it was thought prudent to call in the consolations of religion to the sufferer. The count was now insensible, exhibiting hardly a sign of life; and as fears were entertained lest he should expire during the night, the priest and Thomasine spent it in prayer, while the marquis, who was tormented by the gout, retired to his chamber. Towards morning a favourable crisis appeared; and after some convulsive shiverings, La Cesia uttered a deep sigh and sat up in his couch: the strength of his constitution had triumphed

over his malady. On opening his eyes, he cast them in wonder over the large and unknown apartment in which he found himself, and beheld by the feeble light of a lamp that burned below it a young female kneeling before an image of the Virgin, her hands clasped together, and her looks raised to heaven, in the attitude of fervent prayer. Seated near her in an old-fashioned elbow-chair was a venerable monk attentively perusing his breviary, while the youthful chorister that accompanied the holy man slept soundly and calmly with his head resting against the bed. La Cesia was endeavouring, but in vain, in his confused recollections, to discover some connexion between these various objects and the events of the few previous days; (for there remained on his mind no very distinct traces of any thing that had happened, save the passages of the battle

of Novara and its fatal consequences, which the pain of his wound sufficiently kept him from forgetting,) when Thomasine perceived the happy change that had taken place, and, turning to the priest, hastily exclaimed—

"See, father, he lives—he recovers—Heaven has heard our vows!"

There was in Thomasine's voice that inexpressible sweetness which moves and charms the hearts of the coldest; and the young count, it may be supposed, did not hear it without emotion.

"Consoling angel!" exclaimed Cesia: "thou that prayest for my welfare, whence comes that lively interest that thou deignest to take in my welfare?"

A slight blush overspread the cheeks of the young maiden as she replied to this exclamation. "You are unwell," said she; "you are my

kinsman; and are we not all of the same great family? But you must be calm; the slightest emotion may prove fatal to you. I am going to call my father, who will be most happy to find you restored to life."

At these words she left her chamber; and the count collecting his scattered senses succeeded at length in recollecting the circumstances that had conducted him to the *château* of the Marquis Varèze.

The fever left him that day, and did not return; but the wound in his leg was so deep that it kept him for several weeks confined to a sofa. The marquis meanwhile continued to lavish his attentions on him; but they were no longer paid from a sentiment of humanity merely, he had conceived a real affection for his young guest, in whom he perceived a highly-cultivated and acute understanding,

combined with sentiments worthy of his exalted birth. The chamber of the invalid had been turned into the parlour of the *château*, and thither Thomasine accompanied her father in his visits to his youthful friend. Cesia, who at first had been struck by her beauty, had now an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the qualities of her mind, and of perceiving that they were not inferior to her personal charms. He soon discovered also that her understanding had been carefully cultivated. This advantage she owed to her excellent mother, a woman of distinguished merit, who had received her education in France, and who had filled up the leisure of a country life by bestowing a solid, and at the same time a varied education on her daughter. In the midst of the gay simplicity natural to her years, it was not indeed difficult to perceive the marks

of superior reason; and her intelligent glances, yet more than her words, served to display the extent of her information. The marked features of her character were candour and goodness, united to that benevolence of feeling which leads as naturally to sympathise with the sorrows as with the happiness of those around. On the heart of La Cesia so happy a union of a kind disposition with a person of exquisite beauty made a lively and a deep impression. Never indeed had he experienced any thing similar to the delight that he felt when she was by. The happiness of gazing on her, of listening to her voice, seemed to absorb his entire existence; he forgot freedom, the cause of his country, the mighty interests of a whole life; he not only forgot them, but he was inclined to wonder how they had ever seemed worthy of his thoughts.

He could not help observing, meanwhile, that his presence at Blevio caused the marquis great uneasiness, especially after his name had appeared in the list of the proscription drawn up by the Piedmontese government, and published in the official gazette of Turin.

" Nothing can be kept secret for ever," said the terrified old nobleman to him one day: " we are here surrounded by spies and informers; and if you are denounced, I have no means of saving you. Set out then the moment you can travel, even though it should cost you some exertion. The territory of Switzerland is at no great distance: I shall give you a confidential guide, who will conduct you by the mountain-road as far as Mendrisio; or what is still better, we shall get an escort of smugglers for you, who for a very small recompense will see you safely beyond the frontiers."

To this it was impossible to offer any objections; and impelled by a feeling of delicacy, even more than by any prudential motives, Cesia determined to quit, as soon as he possibly could, a host whom he was anxious not to compromise. He felt, however, the deepest regret at quitting Thomasine.

"Were I," said he to himself, "but certain of her love, then absence would bring with it less suffering; but to part while in doubt, is insupportable." He determined, therefore, to declare his affection; and the very next day an opportunity of doing so presented itself.

About two leagues from Blevio, at an ancient rural seat well known to travellers by the name of Pliny's Villa, there had been recently discovered an inscription respecting the famous intermitting fountain, the description of the singular phenomena exhibited by which, given

with such exactitude by the Roman naturalist, has come down to our times. The Marquis Varèze, who was a great amateur of antiquities, was desirous to copy this inscription, and he invited his young friend to accompany him. "The journey," said the old man, "will not fatigue you; for you can remain in the boat with my daughter, who has been anxious for a long time to take a sketch of that interesting building, and you can assist her with your advice." The count accepted this invitation with pleasure; and that same evening they embarked in one of those handsome shallops which are used by the residents on the banks of the lakes for the purposes of mutual communication. There is no road near the beach. The terraced gardens, or, where cultivation is impossible, the peaked rocks come down to the very water's-edge, and

therefore every summer residence has its boats, with their little harbour to shelter them in blowing weather, and their green-painted boat-house in which to lay them up. Two rowers conduct these little barks, one in the bow and another in the stern; and these boatmen, who are robust, well-made fellows, standing erect, after the fashion of the Venetian gondoliers, bend on their long oars, and handle them with as much vigour as skill. They use no helm, and they traverse the smooth surface of the limpid lake with extraordinary rapidity. When the wind is favourable they make use of a narrow sail, which is hoisted on a mast that can be set up or taken down at pleasure. A table occupies the centre of the boat, round which are placed suitable seats; while an elegant awning, furnished with curtains, protects the passengers from the heat of the sun.

Thomasine had carried with her her *porte-feuille* and her pencils; she had also taken her guitar, for she knew that her father was fond of hearing the sweet tones of her voice. We cannot say that he desired it for the purpose of diverting the listlessness of the voyage, for there is none that affords more pleasure and variety than a sail on the Lake of Como. It does not indeed present the imposing aspect of the Lake of Geneva, where we gaze at once on its vast extent, the smiling knolls that circle round its flowing verge, and the sublimity of the Alps, which form the frame-work of that splendid picture: neither does Como, like the Lago Maggiore, present to us those lovely islets, so famous for their singular palaces and enchanting gardens; but it has beauties, notwithstanding, that are peculiarly its own. At the first view it is impossible to judge of its

real extent, because the hills round it, running forward into the lake like so many headlands, form bays that appear to have no connexion one with another; but this arrangement, which diminishes the grandeur of the view, is more than amply compensated by the variety of scenery that is discoverable at every turn.

The principal of these bays is so surrounded by princely dwellings and country-houses, that its banks have the appearance of the mingled mass of gardens and buildings, that indicates the suburbs of some wealthy and populous city; but once past the headland, and the appearance of the lake has quite changed its character; the gardens have disappeared, or at least they are no longer continuous, and the whole scene bears a rural aspect. On the shore the hills, though precipitous, are clothed with a

verdure of never-failing freshness. The naked rock is only seen on the brink of the lake; and even there the wild fig-trees, with their green shining leaves, and numerous other trees and shrubs, spring forth from every cliff and crevice. The summit of the hills is covered with forest timber; of which, here and there, isolated clumps make their appearance on the pasture grounds.

On the opposite shore, up the slopes that face the sun, are to be found the richest productions of the temperate zone; the olive, the vine, the almond-tree, even the citron thrives there, and finds a shelter in the rocks on which it reclines as upon an immense espalier. Nothing can exceed the high cultivation of this part; every where the eye is filled with the signs of easy abundance, and amply remunerated industry: fruit-trees of all kinds spread along

the walls of the vine-dresser's cottage, and clusters of grapes are seen trailing on its roof; while half-way up the hills are seen the cellars and press-houses of the proprietor, which serve not only for the purposes of manufacture, but are nicely decorated and painted in lively colours: they furnish the promenader with the most delightful prospects; and there are held the festivals during the vintage.

Farther towards the east, at the bottom of an arm of the lake, and sheltered from the ardour of the burning sun, are found the most agreeable of all those habitations that border on the lake, we mean the hamlet of Torno, composed entirely of houses for summer residence, each large enough for the accommodation of a family and of two or three friends. These residences have usually five windows in front: they have two floors, with a rusticated base-

ment: the roofs are flat, and the green Venetian blinds contrast very prettily with the dazzling white of the stuccoed walls. All these houses have landing-places, which lead to a terrace, raised about twenty feet above the surface of the lake. The little gardens, which are bounded by the waters in front, and by the rapid ascent of the hill in the rear, seldom contain any thing but flowers; and the walks of the inhabitants are limited to some narrow pathways, that serpentinise among the brushwood. Two of these houses, that greatly exceed the rest in size and in the profusion of their ornaments, were pointed out to the attention of our voyagers. The handsomest was the Villa Belvidere; whose garden, which is laid out in the English fashion, is bounded on the edge of the lake by a narrow belt of turf, that winds about its elegant

margin. There, on a bank shaded by some large weeping willows, whose pendulous branches hung down to the very surface of the water, sat an old man, habited in oriental costume, with a young and beautiful person, apparently his daughter, by his side. He was the recent purchaser of the villa, a wealthy Greek merchant, who had prudently withdrawn his head and his fortune from the cruel troubles that wasted his unhappy country, and in this peaceful retreat calmly waited until the storm fell. There can be little doubt, that in selecting this abode, he was influenced by the resemblance that its features bore to the lovely scenery of the Bosphorus and of the Propontis, of whose praises we so often hear. Indeed, the sky of his native land could not be more serene, nor its waters more pure, nor its temperature more delightful; he could here enjoy, at the same

period of the spring, the tulips and narcissus, to which Constantinople has given her name; and here he could again hail his old compatriots, the pale olive, the sombre cypress, and the oriental plane. The dimensions of the lake also differed but little from that of the canal of the Euxine; and the height of the surrounding hills was nearly the same. It must be confessed that the little rustic church of Torno was not quite so picturesque as the towery mosque, with its airy minarets: yet the revered symbol of Christianity which crowned the former, proclaiming protection without distinction of belief to all mankind, and which assured to the exile that security which is the first of blessings, might well challenge comparison with the crescent that blazed above the latter—the safeguard of the ferocious Turk, and the signal of hatred and oppression to all beside.

On leaving the hamlet of Torno on the left hand, the lake turns abruptly towards the north, a direction which it preserves to the very foot of the Alps; and the prospect in this quarter is terminated by those mighty masses of heaped-up mountains. It is in front of this beautiful piece of water, in one of the bendings formed by its scooped-out shores, between a lovely cascade on the one hand and the famous intermitting well on the other, that the Villa Pliniana is situated. Of old, a mansion both of pleasure and of study, it was worthy of the rank and fortune of its owner; but all that time has now left is one long gallery raised but a short way above the lake, and destined apparently for enjoying the cool breeze. At one of the ends of this gallery is the muzzle of a colossal lion, which has served for an ornament to a fountain, the waters of which are now lost: the

sculpture of the head is very much admired. These ancient erections have been joined with considerable ingenuity to the modern buildings of a noble Comoese, the Marquis Camaris, who has constructed above the baths, of which some traces are still to be seen, several rooms of handsome proportions, and an elegant portico. The prospect that may be enjoyed from the latter excels any other that presents itself on the whole lake. The extent of the water here seems immense, and the surrounding framework is magnificent. In the extreme back-ground are seen the Rhetian Alps; and nearer the eye, numerous nameless mountains and hills of unequal heights and various hues serve to embellish the landscape; whilst the labours of men, which appear in the distance, harmonise perfectly with those of nature that surround them. Villages encircled by orchards,

picturesque spires, palaces of noblemen of splendid architecture, the elegant residences of the wealthy citizens; finally, woods and meadows with verdure of all shades, rocks, waterfalls, broken grounds, cultured fields whose fertile soil sends up the richest productions, the boat of the fisherman, the barge of the merchant, richly ornamented gondolas skimming, in every sense of the word, over the lightly undulating surface of the lake: all these objects form a combination so delightful, that the most extravagant imagination can ask for nothing more.

The sun was nearly set when the boat of the marquis reached the Villa Pliniana: he landed alone, while Thomasine directed the boat to be pushed off to a convenient distance for sketching that interesting monument, interesting both

from the beauty of its site, and from the recollections associated with it. Having stationed the shallop a little to the westward of the spot where her father had landed, she could command a side-view of the cascade which falls from a rock close to the house; and she could, at the same time, perceive through the arcade of the portico the ancient cypresses, whose lofty and tufted tops tower above the edifice. The point of view was happily chosen; but she was but little skilled in the art of perspective, and she was puzzled and displeased in consequence with her labours.

"How happens it," said she somewhat impatiently to La Cesia, who endeavoured to assist her with his advice, "that one can never render exactly even those objects that affect the imagination in the most lively manner?"

"It is not thus," replied he in an expressive tone, "where the heart is deeply affected; see here a proof of it."

While pronouncing these words, he hastily traced with the pencil a resemblance of his youthful relation.

The likeness was admirable.

"What!" exclaimed she, "this is my portrait!"

"Yes, 'tis yourself," replied the count, casting on Thomasine a passionate glance: "but keep the sketch; I need it not. Your image is here," added he, placing his hand on his heart; "the likeness here is a much more marked one, and it can never be effaced."

A deep blush overspread the cheeks of Thomasine: the pencil with which she had been drawing hung suspended in her trembling hand while the count went on—

In declaring to you my sentiments at the moment that I am about to leave you, I ask you for nothing. I know I have no right to do so. I had gazed on you—I had admired your beauty, but now I know you, and I adore your mind. So many charms, so many attractions would affect the most insensible. If what I have now uttered excite not your anger, deign to tell me so. I shall carry with me that consolation, and my exile will be so much the less miserable.

"It would be impossible to continue my voyage," said Lucrezia in a faltering voice; and rising up, she ordered the boatmen to row for the shore, and to enter the little harbour at the foot of the old gallery. While they were obeying her command, she leaned her head against the mast in silence. The count again addressed her in a despairing accent.

"What! not one word? Why, if I have offended you, if you have any aversion for me, not tell me so frankly? That is the only means, if any means are possible, to drive my fatal passion from me. Oh yes, for pity's sake, say that you hate me."

"I hate!" exclaimed Thomasine eagerly; "and begin to hate by hating you!—you, whom ——." She stopped, as if alarmed at what she had said, while large tears rolled over her blushing cheeks, and choking sighs oppressed her breathing. The count was transported; and he would have expressed his transport at her feet, had not the boat that moment touched the shore. Thomasine sprung from its bow with the rapidity of a bird, and ran forward to rejoin her father, saying to La Cesia as she left him—"If you should be induced to

sketch while waiting for us, you can finish mine; I shall retain yours."

The researches of the marquis were finished, and he embarked with his daughter; but the breeze was against them, and they were obliged, in order to regain Blevio, to stand over the lake opposite the Villa d'Este. In approaching that palace, which was at that time inhabited by the Queen of England, they heard a loud sound of instruments; and, by-and-bye, two boats filled with musicians put off, preceded by a shallop richly gilded, and tricked out with flags more richly than tastefully; at the stern of which, on a raised seat, sat Caroline, like another Cleopatra; and, like Cleopatra also, she sat beside her lover. That lover was indeed neither a Cæsar nor an Antony, but a person of low rank, formerly one of her domestics; vulgar

in features as low in birth, and distinguished for nothing but a tall and athletic form. Thick whiskers covered the half of his face; and a coat decorated with some order or other, purchased with a small sum of money, but dearly purchased at the same time, had been substituted for his courier's jacket. His hand rested with impudent familiarity on the arm of his mistress. Below them sat three of his female relations, women of course of the lowest rank in society, who held the place of maids of honour to the wife of one of the most powerful sovereigns in the world.

In passing the barge of the queen, the marquis and his daughter arose and saluted her respectfully. It was not, however, her person so much as her rank that attracted their homage, which accused the object it was meant to honour. Even the boatmen of their shallop,

CHAPTER XI.

FROM the period of his visit to the Villa Pliniana, La Cesia's recovery was rapid, his wound closed, and his strength was visibly increasing every hour. Gratified affection (and love is ever gratified when it has hope to feed on) is the best of all physicians. The marquis, without penetrating the cause of this favourable change, viewed with satisfaction the approach of the moment that he was to be rid of the embarrassment of a guest, whose presence,

though he was far from regretting that he had received him into his family, had nevertheless occasioned him the most lively uneasiness. As for the count, he experienced a sentiment not altogether opposite: that cure, whose slowness formerly caused him so much impatience, now appeared too hasty, inasmuch as it took from him every excuse for prolonging his stay with her to whom he was so warmly attached. Dared he, while he obeyed the call of a rigorous duty, and removed himself from her presence—dared he hope that the impression he had produced in the heart of Themasine was sufficiently deep not to be effaced by his absence? All that he knew was, that she had not seemed to take offence at his declaration of his love; but there was a long interval between such a state of mind in his mistress, and that feeling in which he wished her to participate, and without

which he conceived it impossible for him to endure existence. In this perplexity he sought to renew the conversation that had been begun in the boat; but, though they met every day, so great was her care to avoid any such an opportunity, that he found it impossible. Scarce could he even catch a glance of her eye; for the moment that he looked towards her, her long and silken lashes were drawn downward, and a slight carnation passed over her cheek. Assuredly these were not symptoms of indifference, but they spoke a degree of reserve but ill calculated to satisfy a passionate lover. The truth is, that Thomasine had been as much affected as surprised on hearing the declaration of Cesia. Up to that moment she had never asked of her own heart, whether the interest that she took in the young man's fate had any thing in it more tender than the benevolent commise-

ration that she felt for every one that partook of her cares. She was pleased with his society; she thought him much more amiable than any other man she had seen; but in the simplicity of her heart, she was utterly ignorant how very dear he was to her, until the moment when his unexpected declaration unveiled the secret of her bosom to herself. Though astonished and alarmed even at the strength of the sentiments she entertained, she sought not however to combat them, for she saw nothing blamable in their indulgence: yet by an instinctive feeling of modesty, inseparable from innocence, she endeavoured to hide from every eye her mental agitation, and the confusion that it caused her. It had, however, produced so great a change in the whole of her appearance, that any one with the slightest attention might have discovered its cause. Her gaiety now, much less

than before, no longer resembled the liveliness of childhood; her look was much more touching: the expression of her countenance, which no shade had previously clouded, was become pensive, and occasionally absent; and not unfrequently involuntary sighs escaped from her bosom. With her father her manners were more caressing than usual: she embraced the little orphans, towards whom she acted as mother, more tenderly; and when prostrated at the altar, her prayers were more fervent. When La Cesia was sick, she had prayed for him; now that his health was no longer the subject of uneasiness, his name was ever recurring to her thoughts, and influenced her to beg of Heaven to preserve and to prosper him.

In spite of all these marks, the marquis saw not what was passing in the heart of his daughter; for of all eyes, the least acute are

those of fathers and husbands; but he saw with pleasure that the count would be soon in a condition to endure the fatigue of the journey necessary for their mutual safety; and he was already occupied in preparations for that purpose, when one of those Lombard pedlars that cross the Rhetian Alps twice every year for the purpose of carrying to France and Switzerland barometers, cages, and other small wares, happened to arrive at the palace of Blevio. These active and intelligent fellows conduct their petty traffic with such rigid economy, that it is not rare to see them, after a few years, in a condition to build a convenient house, and plant a handsome orchard on the banks of their native lake. The one to which we are now alluding was son to an inhabitant of Torno, who rented some fields belonging to the marquis. He used to speak with his superior in

private, and when he was alone with him, he told him that he had just arrived from Paris, and that he had undertaken to deliver a sum of money and a letter to the young officer that was concealed in his house. The marquis, alarmed at a secret of so much importance being divulged, and thus confided to a person whose sentiments were unknown, was at first tempted to deny every thing; but he was soon reassured by the appearance of the young man, whose family were in some measure dependent on him, and he himself conducted him to the count, who had not the slightest expectation of such a communication.

The subject of it we may describe in a very few words. The recent events in Piedmont, and the destruction, after so feeble a struggle, of the Neapolitan revolution, which was, it was generally affirmed, to arouse the whole of Italy,

had completely disconcerted the bands of conspirators who, from one end of Europe to the other, were zealously labouring, although from different motives, to overthrow all thrones, and to open again a way for universal revolution. The Countess Gradiska partook of their vexation; but as she had placed but little hope in a rash enterprise conducted by persons whose incapacity she well knew, she was not astonished at the result. She endeavoured, therefore, to support the sunken courage of her companions by pointing to Spain, where the flame of insurrection burnt daily brighter; whilst in France, where the fate of Europe was ultimately to be decided, the cause was daily acquiring fresh proselytes.

In the mean time, the most lively uneasiness agitated the breast of that lady, whose energy of character raised her so much above her sex,

and we may say above the age in which she lived. She was aware that her youthful friend had served in the ranks of the Piedmontese insurgents, and she dreaded lest his ungovernable courage should have proved fatal to him in the disastrous rencontre at Novara. Three weeks elapsed before her correspondents in Switzerland and Italy were able to give her the information respecting his fate which she had requested. At length she discovered by one of the emissaries of the Bonaparte family, which had never ceased to keep up active communications with the discontented party in France and in Italy, that La Cesia had been grievously wounded, but that he had not fallen into the hands of the victors, because he had been seen some days after the battle in the neighbourhood of the Lago Maggiore. The next courier informed her that he had found an

asylum in the house of the Marquis Varèze, and she instantly adopted measures for sending him what assistance his condition might require. After some inquiries, a man from the Lake of Como, who had successfully acquitted himself of several similar commissions, was pointed out to the countess. To him she delivered a hundred napoleons, a letter of credit on a banker at Geneva, and a passport for the count, under the name of Noirval. This document was regularly drawn up with all the stamps and signatures necessary; and for the greater security, she had the precaution to get it *visé* by the ambassadors of Austria and of Sardinia; those very governments by which the person to whom their representatives thus unwittingly granted safety and protection, had been proscribed; an additional proof, if any were wanting, that the invention of passports,

which seems so marvellous in the eyes of small-witted statesmen, while it is extremely troublesome to the peaceful traveller, has yet the advantage of serving occasionally the purposes of the treasonable conspirator. In her letter which accompanied the remittance, the countess pressed her friend to come to Paris. "This capital," said the billet, "will very speedily be the theatre of mighty events; and a character worthy of your courage and of your talents has been set apart for you."

La Cesia was sensibly affected by the interest in his welfare manifested by his friend, but his views were no longer what they had been; one single idea had possessed itself of the whole faculties of his soul, and though still faithful to the oaths that he had sworn to his confederates, he was no longer capable of fulfilling them. Anxious, hesitating, and uncertain, as

to what resolution he should adopt, he at length finished by yielding to the imperious duty that called him to quit Blevio; although he could not prevail on himself to remove to a distance from it. His affection, however, for one to whom he had given the title of sister, did not allow him to keep that determination concealed from her; and he felt, besides, the want of some friendly bosom, into which he could pour the confession of those sentiments which wholly filled his heart.

The letter that he wrote on this occasion to the countess, expresses much better than we could do the situation in which this impassioned and impetuous young man then was. It ran thus:—

To the Countess Stanislas Gradiska.

Blevio, May, 1821.

You have discharged towards me, my dear sister, all the duties of friendship, with an ingenuity of zeal, the secret of which none but women know. It must be allowed that you feel, and can display a more tender and more constant devotedness than we can; but in love, how superior are we to you! Would you contest the point? Is not the energy of our passions naturally and necessarily proportionate to our strength of mind and of character? I speak of that species of love of which I now experience the power. With such love the heart is wholly filled, the mind is exclusively occupied; it absorbs every faculty of the soul; every act of the understanding, or of the perception, is influenced by its power and devoted

to its uses; and, like a true tyrant, it refuses to its victim even the indulgence of his own thoughts.

Yet how utterly incomprehensible the cause that operates on mankind with such resistless force! Assuredly, if perfect beauty, united to every mental perfection, were sufficient to inspire an ardent passion, I should still be clinging to your feet; but you know that a single refusal, and that of the least offensive kind, was sufficient to quench the flame that burned, but consumed me not. I imagined that I loved you—I but admired you. Shall I tell you that the irresistible charms of her I now adore excuse the violence of the passion I feel? Certainly I might call her charms irresistible, were all eyes formed as mine are. Would you ask me if she possesses all the graces that captivate, all the wit that seduces, all the qualifications

that retain a lover's affections? Alas! I cannot answer the question. All that I know of this young maiden is, that candour is seated on her brow—that the smile of kindness plays round her lips—that heaven beams from her eyes: that to gaze on her is my supreme felicity—to think on her my only business. In such a state of mind, what do you look for from me? What would you confide to me? Speak, my sister, would it be prudent to intrust such high interests to such wavering hands? for I must confess to you, I no longer find in myself those faculties that to you appeared superior to those of other men, nor do I know whither they are fled. Yet, bewail me not, my dearest friend; the wanderings of my heart are of all things the most delightful; nor would I exchange the species of annihilation that I at present experience for all the glories that the world has to bestow.

Switzerland, where I shall remain for some time. Come what will, you shall hear of my fate; friendship and gratitude equally attach me to you. Believe ever, that all that remains of me is yours.

CHAPTER XII.

La Cesia, as he had stated to the countess, left the Palace Varèze next day. He went first to Como, where his passport was regularly *vised*, as if he had just arrived from Paris; and the same night setting out for Lugano, he entered the Swiss territory without difficulty. Not wishing however to remove from the frontier, he resolved to pass the period of his probation on the heights that overlook the town of Mendrisio. To these hills, where the pasture

is good, the inhabitants of the canton of Tesino are in the habit of driving their herds during the summer months. The air is pure, and the grass tender and juicy: the milk is in consequence excellent; and the numerous Alpine plants diffuse a fragrance which is as healthy as it is agreeable. From the place where he took up his abode it was possible, by climbing one of the highest peaks, to see the south shore of the Lake of Como; he could even, when the sky was very clear, discover the hill at the foot of which Blevio was situated. This, it will be confessed, was not the way to forget Thomasine; but he had not the slightest desire to drive her cherished image from his heart. All that he anxiously sought to ascertain was, what effect absence would produce on those tumultuous feelings that had lately agitated his heart, not less wonderfully than inexplicably. The hut

in which he resided was a *châlet*, or summer shieling, sheltered on the north by the forest of Larges, that crowns the ridge of these hills; and his only company was a young shepherd and his two sisters, who were employed in collecting hay for their cattle during the winter, and in milking their cows and making cheese. La Cesia sometimes joined in those rural amusements; but for the most part he sat on the point of a rock that hung over a precipice in the neighbourhood, pondering in his mind over the various events of his past life.

That life had been but short, and yet how crowded with incidents! Travels to distant lands; two warlike campaigns, under opposing banners; political intrigues surrounded by perils of every description had consumed his youth. And what had been the upshot of all these troubles? What enjoyment had they

purchased for him? Nowhere did his memory repose with pleasure but on the brief space in the past, that had been devoted to the cultivation of literature. "And yet," exclaimed he to himself, "what do studies without end, learning never complete, what do all our meditations on objects inaccessible to our limited means, and which only terminate in plunging us in an abyss of doubt and darkness, contribute to the happiness of life? Woes me! the shepherd yonder, who is frolicking on the velvety turf with his two sisters, is he not as much conversant with the secret of happiness as I am? What an air of content they wear! what undisturbed gaiety they display! what wisdom in their want of thought! They care not for the reveries of philosophy or the combinations of crooked politics, whose fatal name they do not even know. They see no grounds of un-

easiness as I do, and those who are like me, in the decrees of a capricious despot, or his perverse agents, at a hundred leagues' distance from them. Every thing around you, simple indwellers of this delightful clime, is to you peaceful and smiling; the future is as bright as the past has been fortunate, and the happiness of the sires will be the common inheritance of innumerous generations of their sons! Good young man! down in the plain that stretches at our feet, or perhaps on the other side of the little hill from which the torrent separates us, I can in my fancy view the simple companion that fate has destined for thee, by whom the never-dying family of thy fathers is to be perpetuated, and who is to crown all thy wishes, by adding to thy enjoyments the blessings of a father."

While he pronounced these words, a tear of

pleasure coursed down his cheek, and he sunk in a profound reverie; but he did not remain in that state long. To this momentary calm his former troubled thoughts soon succeeded, and hastily starting up, he exclaimed, "What! do not I also aspire to happiness, and why should I not grasp it? Thomasine—she might be—she shall be mine! What mighty obstacle separates us? And if obstacles there be, are they insurmountable?" Hurried away by the feeling of the moment, he eagerly directed his steps through the brushwood and shingle towards that point of the horizon where were seen the heaped-up vapours that half concealed the summit of the hills, the base of which is washed by the Lake of Como. By-and-bye, falling in with an almost perpendicular mountain path, he followed its windings until they led him to the brink of the torrent; he was about to pass

over by the long and yielding plank that united the two banks, but the sun was now setting, and darkness was already creeping up the valley. It was necessary, therefore, to renounce for that day any attempt to approach the dwelling of Thomasine; and he again sought in sadness and thoughtfulness his rustic dwelling. The inmates were already sunk in deep slumber when the count arrived, and he took unheeded his place beside them on the heap of dry leaves that served for their common bed; for in these lofty regions, purity of manners remains intact like a treasure preserved in an unapproachable citadel. He reclined, but his mind was too much harassed by fears, desires, and uncertainties, to permit him to enjoy the sweets of sleep. "In ordinary times," mused he to himself, "nothing could have been more suitable than a union between our family and that of

the Marquis Varèze. My birth and my fortune entitle me to the hand of the highest dame in Lombardy; yet existing circumstances deprive me, at least for the present, of all these advantages. Proscribed by the Piedmontese government, which I wished to overthrow, my property there is in all probability even now seized by the government, and will hardly fail to be confiscated. On the other hand, Austria, which a community of danger unites in the closest ties to Sardinia, will not be more regardful of my possessions in the Milanese; but what say I? Is not my freedom, the most precious of all my possessions, already threatened? Yes; and is not a process of high-treason, among the least consequences of which would be an imprisonment in some old castle for years, the sad prospect of her that should consent to unite her destinies with mine? Perhaps, indeed,

time and reason, more than the boasted clemency of princes, may lead to some amelioration of those rigours; but I know the timid character of the father of Thomasine. His anxiety about his safety, which he indulges to pusillanimity, will lead him to oppose with all his power the proffer of a connexion which may render his political opinions yet more suspected than they at present are. Even though he believed that the happiness of his daughter was at stake, he would not sacrifice his ease to purchase it."

These were depressing thoughts, and they afflicted La Cesia, although they did not discourage him. His constitution was singularly made up, for he united to a vivacity that was often pushed to violence a tenaciousness of purpose the most persevering. Unhappily, no moral check had sufficient influence over him

to restrain from transgressing the limits of strict duty. As soon as his reason had convinced him that the marquis would refuse his consent, his only remaining consideration was to contrive means of dispensing with it. He was not yet so corrupted as not to seek to justify in his own eyes so culpable a wish. "Let her," said he, "but love me; let me be assured of that, it will suffice to impose on me the obligation for life of studying only her happiness. To bring misfortune upon her and upon myself out of regard to a vulgar prejudice, which holds out paternal jurisdiction as of divine origin, would be too great an act of folly. Like many others, the tyrannical power over his offspring vested by law in the parent is the bitter fruit of civilisation, and springs solely from that love of domineering which, arguing upon the requirements of childhood, would in-

definitely prolong dependence, and continue to subject to its thrall those who no longer require restraint nor counsel. Nature points out other rules more consonant to justice. Among animals, the tenderness of the mother, which is so warm, so devoted, and so constant, continues not a moment after the necessity for it has ceased; and when it departs, indifference the most perfect succeeds, and with it perfect equality. How falsely do men reason in similar cases! This old man is the absolute master of his daughter's destiny, and he is charged with her safety: yet, from his feebleness and timidity, he is utterly incapable of conducting himself in a moment of difficulty; and in such a moment would yet scruple, perhaps, to immolate her angel beauty to his own safety!"

Such was the sophistry that the headstrong

youth employed in defence of his unbridled passion. Yet his conscience from the bottom of a heart whose feelings were naturally just, and an understanding naturally acute, rejected such a process of reasoning; and they took what was the most obvious way to have their appeal listened to, by exciting uneasiness in his thoughts respecting the future condition of the beloved object. Determined as he was to carry off Thomasine from her father's house, he yet hesitated whither to bear her. Was he to take her to a foreign land? And if he did, what could he offer her there? In his regardlessness of his fortune, he had neglected to lay aside a sum sufficient for his maintenance, at least for a few years, in honourable ease; and he now cursed that contempt of money which had formerly been his boast: for how could he contemplate her whom he

held so dear, whom he deemed worthy of all the thrones in the universe, for whom he would have desired to heap up all the enjoyments that gold could buy, compelled to undergo for his sake the privations of poverty, the humiliations of distress? Tears of bitterness dropped from his eyes as he contemplated a picture that so deeply wounded his pride; and at the moment he was under the influence of these feelings, he was tempted for ever to renounce an attachment that presented so slender prospects of happiness. But the barbed arrow that had struck him had pierced his heart too deeply; his efforts to pluck it out were vain, and only served to prove that a passion so interwoven with his existence would only perish with it.

In such a frame of mind repose was impossible. La Cesia rose, and walked hastily back-

ward and forward in the neighbourhood of the little hut: day had not yet dawned on the valleys, but it is sooner perceived on the mountains. Already in the distance might be seen the snowy tops of the higher Alps, whose pale rose colour was soon to be changed into one of dazzling whiteness as the glimmering stars melted away by degrees before the nascent day. The horizon was clear, all but a few thin bluish mists that lingered on the side of the lower hills, and promised a fine day. Below the shieling, under the shelter of a frowning rock, and girt round by an inclosure formed of young fir-branches, arranged in lozenges, the herd of his host were quietly waiting to be led out to their pasture grounds; every thing around was still and silent; the birds slumbered in their nests, and the cool breeze of the morning breathed so gently on the leaves of the lofty trees that they

gave not even a murmur back; the only sound that struck the ear was the feeble trickle of a thread of water, which rustic industry had contrived to turn into some troughs of pine wood, so as to form an artificial watering-place for the cattle; the air was loaded with sweet and balsamic perfumes.

At this period of the day, at the moment of dawn, when refreshing slumber has restored to animals and man sufficient strength to recommence a course of motion and labour, the common destiny of all that breathes, something like a salutary crisis is commonly apparent. The herbs raise their drooping stems, the senses revive, the sinking produced by the fatigues of the previous day disappear as the shadows depart. But nowhere is this effect more sensibly felt than on the levels of lofty mountains; where, at an equal distance from the vapours

that moisten the plains, and the eternal snows that put a stop to all vegetation, we appear as it were to move between earth and heaven.

Cesia, notwithstanding his uneasiness, did not fail to experience the return of that feeling of gratification, that plenitude of vitality that is unknown to the natives of the low grounds, and that gives so inexpressible a charm to existence. His depressed heart revived within him; his soul expanded under the influence of the rising sun as the flower when it rears its head that has been bent under the weight of the night dews: a more smiling horizon opened on his view, and in a short time the splendid spectacle that surrounded him kindled his imagination, and in his enthusiasm he exclaimed,—" So lovely a scene as this is alone worthy of my well-beloved; 'tis here she ought

to dwell with the happy mortal that knows how to appreciate her worth. Oh! that our days might flow away sweetly and noiseless, as this limpid brook that, springing from an unknown source, glides gently on to the gulf, in whose darkness and profundity it is at last lost! Why should I disquiet myself at the thought of her happiness? Her tastes are simple and rural. Has she not repeatedly told me that noisy pleasures have no attractions for her? that she despises luxury and vain show? What then can she have to regret in abandoning what is termed the world? Doubtless, the cares that she bestows on the unfortunate must cease; but if she find in these exalted regions none that requires her charitable aid, she can descend to the valleys, where she may pass for one of those angels of the upper air, to whom she bears so

intimate a resemblance. Ah! let her but love me; let her but consent to unite her lot with mine, and I shall answer for her happiness!"

The romantic ideas, which he welcomed with transport, continued to work in the brain of the passionate lover. In vain did reason endeavour to point out the obstacles that rendered his project unattainable; it was irrevocably fixed in his mind, and his inventive spirit was thenceforth only occupied in plans for realising it.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIFFICULTIES of every kind opposed the designs of Cesia; and they were such as a temper less persevering than his would have found insurmountable. In fact, it was all but impossible to get to Thomasine, in order to ascertain her sentiments, without incurring the greatest risks; for the description of Cesia had been distributed, along with those of the other proscribed parties, among all the agents of the Austrian police; and not only had he

to escape their vigilance, but he had to penetrate to the residence of the Marquis Varèze without being perceived by any one but his daughter. For greater security he passed the frontier in company with one of those numerous bands of smugglers which regularly supply Lombardy with a number of articles, of which the imperial government has attempted, but in vain, to prevent the introduction. Of serious danger he ran but small risk; for these fellows are much more in the habit of exchanging crowns than shots with the revenue officers.

Having reached without hindrance the banks of the Lake of Como, the count passed over the water opposite to Blevio, and landing in a lonely cove at the foot of a rock that had been worn away by the incessant fretting of the waves that broke on it, he sought shelter until

nightfall in a moss-grown cave, the mouth of which was obscured by the branches of a wild fig-tree. When the hour was come to quit this retreat, he climbed the hill, gained the wood that stretches along its summit above the garden-ground, and thence by a scarce trodden footpath he descended to a little gate that communicated between the palace of Varèze and a cottage occupied by the vine-dresser of the marquis. He was aware that Thomasine had been in the habit of going to this cottage every day from the period that the wife of the old servant had been affected with a palsy, which rendered her no longer capable of watching over the education of her children, and hardly had he stationed himself there before she appeared.

The sun had gone down for nearly an hour, but the horizon still flamed with light; for not

unfrequently in that fine clime during the twilight, the golden and purple-coloured clouds that hang over the lake are so brightly reflected in the crystal of its waters, that they bestow on surrounding objects a singular, though short-lived splendour, which eclipses that of broad day. Thomasine did not at the first glance recognise the count, who stood in her path holding a paper in his hand, with which he shaded his features; but the instant that he spoke she experienced a fit of trembling so great that she tottered, and had nearly fallen. La Cesia sprung forward to support her, and begged her to calm her alarm. "Fear not," said he to her, in tones in which respect and tenderness mingled; "let nothing disturb the tranquillity that I would guarantee at the expense of my life. I wish to converse with you for a minute—this is indispensable; but

I swear to you notwithstanding, that it will entirely depend on yourself whether I shall see you in future;—all that I now ask you is to read this paper."

As he finished these words, without waiting for her answer, he abruptly quitted her presence and plunged into the thicket. Thomasine hurried across the garden with as much haste as her agitation permitted; what she had just heard had indeed excited her curiosity in the highest degree. We shall not give the words of the message. Writings of that kind have all one common resemblance; or if they differ, they differ in the form of expression only; they interest therefore those only whom they peculiarly regard. Yet however exaggerated, however extravagant such productions may seem to persons of cold temperament, they are not for the most part the less sincere, unless

we except the promises which they generally lavish; these, we confess, are generally rash or doubtful. One thing however distinguished the epistle of Cesia from all the loveletters that have come to our knowledge; instead of soliciting with ardour a speedy answer, he besought Thomasine to reflect maturely on what she read before she came to an irrevocable determination.

"Whatever be the degree of my impatience," it went on—"whatever be the dangers to which I am exposed by remaining here, I shall willingly wait one day—many days. If you consent to our union, that our happiness may be permanent I must owe nothing to precipitation, and still less to pity."

We may mark in these expressions that haughty soul, whose pride, which formed its characteristic feature, even love had not sub-

dued. As to Thomasine, absence, far from weakening the sentiments that Cesia had inspired her with, had only made her fully sensible of their force. It was to the count that all her thoughts had reference, and it was the image of the count that was ever present to her eyes. It was, therefore, with inexpressible joy she learned that she was beloved; but the delicious feeling was speedily troubled by the reflections that her situation inspired.

"He asks me if I love him," said she to herself; "alas! if I only listened to the suggestions of my own heart, the answer would be an easy one. He seeks, before endeavouring to remove those obstacles that oppose our union, to be certain of my consent! Does he not perceive that the principal obstacle lies in the will of my father, and why does he not address himself to him? Ah! it is assuredly from a

sentiment of delicacy; he wishes not that paternal authority should interpose before he is assured of my assent to his application! But how can I express it? Propriety—my duty—forbid me to see him in private, and even to write to him. Yes, I owe to him, whom Heaven in its goodness has assigned to me as my protector, the most minute account of all my actions, of all my resolutions."

This argument was conclusive, and she was convinced by it: for virtue exercises over hearts that have never gone astray the most absolute authority. Thomasine determined then to carry the count's letter forthwith to her father; but as she descended from the chamber which she occupied on the first floor, she saw through the window of the stair the candles that had lighted the apartment of the venerable old man extinguished. She feared to disturb

his repose, and she slowly returned, content to put off until the morrow a communication, the necessity of which she acknowledged, but of which she experienced by anticipation all the embarrassment. A painful recollection at that moment came across her of her departed mother. Whatever be the tenderness of a daughter, nay, whatever be the love even of a son towards a father, it is only into the bosom of a mother that children can pour with endearing confidence the secrets of the heart.

Sleep did not fail to interrupt the current of her thoughts; but her slumbers were neither long nor peaceful. Long ere day dawned she awoke with a piercing cry. She had in her dreams beheld a horrifying sight: she fancied that in a sharp altercation which La Cesia maintained with the marquis on the subject of his marriage, the latter, while repulsing his

daughter, who had sunk at his feet, made a false step and fell backward. The old man called aloud for help; and a band of Austrian soldiers, led on by an agent of police, attracted by the noise, came running forward; they seized the count, and were about to drag him to prison, when by a sudden effort he released himself from their grasp, and, preferring death to imprisonment, plunged headlong into the lake.

It was a long time before Thomasine, who was so dreadfully terrified, that she could hardly breathe, recovered from the agitation into which this fatal vision had thrown her. It was not, indeed, until she had passed an hour in prayer at the foot of the Virgin, whom she especially honoured, that her mind became sufficiently calm to reflect on her situation.

What she had beheld in her dreams was,

indeed, but the idle illusion of a heated imagination; but truth, as is generally the case, had furnished the groundwork.

In fact, it was but too probable that, in existing circumstances, the marquis would refuse the consent required, and the violent character of the count was sufficient to excite the most lively alarms. "How will he be able," thought Thomasine, "to support the rigour of my silence, and the indignity of a refusal so signified? Hitherto a degree of prudence and of reserve, not at all to be expected from him, has regulated his conduct; but if his request be refused, his violence will break through all restraints. Alas! it is too true, every hope of happiness for me is lost for ever! But," continued she, weeping bitterly, "while I am occupied in anticipated sorrows, an imminent danger hangs over us. If he obstinately determines to re-

main in this neighbourhood, in a country filled with spies and traitors, he will be unquestionably discovered, and given over to his pitiless enemies. The soldiers—the lake—the whole is a salutary warning sent by Heaven. I must profit by its goodness."

A rigid moralist would doubtless have easily refuted these reasonings, which were specious rather than solid; but they did not appear the less conclusive in the eyes of a young and honourable, but inexperienced female, who thought she could without any breach of duty, nay, who thought it an act paramount to all others to save an unhappy and beloved object in momentary danger of perishing. Reared by a pious and charitable mother, and accustomed from her infancy to compassionate misfortune, to solace misery, it may be easily supposed that she confounded with the promptings of huma-

nity the secret love that she felt in the bottom of her heart. Whatever should be the consequence, she determined that her father should not see the letter of La Cesia, at least until she had despatched a billet to the latter, imploring him to remove from a spot where his personal safety was exposed to so great a risk. She thought that she ought at the same time to inform him, that the marquis had an invincible repugnance to bestow his daughter's hand on a proscribed man; and that it was worse than useless to ask it of him so long as the existing state of things remained; and that was too violent to last long. Of her own personal feelings Thomasine firmly resolved to breathe not a syllable: if the count's sagacity enabled him to divine them, she was not to blame. The only thing that remained was to find a messenger to carry her letter. After a little consideration, she deter-

mined to intrust it to the eldest daughter of the vine-dresser, and with this intention she went at an earlier hour than usual to the cottage; but on her arrival there, she learned, to her great chagrin as well as surprise, that the child was not in a condition to execute her commission. In the morning the measles, that were raging throughout the district, had indicated their presence by a smart attack of fever; and the sorrowing mother, who was confined to her bed, was impatiently looking for her benefactress, in whom all her hopes were placed: nor were they placed in vain. Thomasine, neglecting her dearest inclinations, thought of nothing but succouring the little patient; she hastily despatched a messenger to Como for the physician, while she prepared a suitable potion for the child; nor was it until the

physician had arrived, and had declared that there was no danger, that she thought of returning to the palace of her father. The hour appointed for her meeting with the count was long passed, yet it was possible he might have waited with a view to see her. Pondering on this possibility, she with a tottering step advanced towards the garden gate, and finding no one there, she opened and shut it again with a lingering hand; but scarcely had she got within the enclosure when, at the turn of the first alley, she beheld in the clear moonlight the shadow of a man of lofty stature projected on the gravel. Not doubting that this was La Cesia, she went up to him, and held out the billet that she had written.

"Heaven is my witness," said she, "that I had no intention of meeting you. Take my

answer, and for Heaven's sake withdraw from a place where you are no longer in safety."

"Since you have consented to write to me," replied he, taking eagerly the paper thus presented to him, "you will surely deign to listen to me for a few moments."

"No, I cannot—I am entirely dependent on my father's will; he alone can dispose of me."

In pronouncing these words, she made a motion to withdraw; but the count sprung suddenly before her, and barred the way of her retreat. "You speak to me of your father," said he, with an eagerness into which some feeling of anger entered; "you wish me to address myself to him, as if the business between you and me were a matter of sordid interest. Listen to me, Thomasine," he vehemently continued, perceiving that she still sought to

escape; "I seek not to turn you away from the obedience you owe to the author of your days, but think that the feebleness of his character may lead him to commit irreparable errors in disposing of your hand, and that of these errors you will be the first victim. His health is visibly declining; he requires not only your touching cares, your beloved presence, he requires, besides, a supporting friend, especially in the present difficult circumstances in which the country is placed. You assure his peace by consenting to unite your destinies with mine. Never, never, believe me, did a son show more affectionate, more devoted attention to a father, than I am prepared to offer to yours."

These last expressions soothed Thomasine as much as the commencement of the conversation had alarmed her. "How well you divine my

feelings!" said she to him with much emotion. "Yes, my most ardent wishes are for my father's happiness; and there is no sacrifice I would not make in order to ensure so desirable an end. You tell me you are desirous to assist me in its attainment; follow that generous determination, and endeavour immediately to free yourself from the dangerous position in which the late troubles have placed you. It is most unjust that courage so brilliant and talents so distinguished should be lost to the world and to us. My father does justice to your merits; he loves your person; if he prefer your suit, it will not be from me," added she, blushing deeply, "that you will meet any opposition to his will."

"Adorable girl!" cried the count, throwing himself at her feet; "angel of virtue and of filial

affection, would you then have me submit to the humiliation of appealing to the mercy of the tyrants of my country for pardon of an offence which was but the act of a bold and free man, and which success would have amply justified? Yes, though no terror of punishment could ever prevail on me, nor any horrors of captivity, even the most dreadful, one word from your lips, one flattering hope will be sufficient to determine me to that course: love has vanquished this heart of iron.—Behold me at your disposal, a submissive slave, if such be your will! Henceforth I shall bite my chain in silence." He trembled with indignation while he spoke these words; but soon assuming a calmer tone, he added, "Since I must remove myself from you, and perhaps for a long time, what will support my courage under so

painful a trial?—What pledge will you give me of a sentiment that is the glory of my existence, and the only tie that binds me to it?"

A momentary silence ensued on both sides; it was broken by Thomasine, exclaiming with a firmness of tone that resembled inspiration—

"La Cesia, follow me!"

As she thus spoke, she descended with hasty steps a pathway leading to a pavilion, whose exterior was painted in various colours, and served as a decoration to that part of the garden; there, pushing open a door that was half concealed by the foliage, she led the wondering count into one of those ossuaries that are not uncommon in the north of Lombardy and in Switzerland; receptacles where the piety of a semi-civilised people has of old time consecrated to religion the remains of their

ancestors, by arranging them in symmetrical masses. At the bottom of this vault there was a Madonna, surrounded by a framework strangely composed of these mournful fragments. Every thing was calm and silent in this abode of death; the reflection of the moon which danced on the lake alone seemed to bestow a flickering motion on these blanched and dried remains. Familiarised from her infancy to the sombre scene, Thomasine was in the frequent habit of visiting this solitary oratory to pour out her evening prayers. On entering it on the present occasion, she stretched out her hand, and resting it on the altar, said in a solemn tone—

"La Cesia, let what will happen, I call Heaven and these mute evidences to witness, I shall never be any but yours."

"And I," cried La Cesia, in a transport of pleasure that rose to ecstasy, "receive thy faith, and solemnly pledge my own to thee."

It is probable that in pronouncing these words, in the heat of the moment, he struck the base of one of those tottering pyramids that had been reared on each side of the altar, for it crumbled down with a loud crash; and one of the sculls that had composed it rolled forward to the feet of the two lovers. Cesia was struck with horror at the omen, and involuntarily put his hand on his pistols, while Thomasine could not repress a shriek; but her cry was the result of the surprise only, the accident had not affected her farther. When the count therefore began to soothe her, she calmly answered his endeavours by observing, that the dead alarmed her not. "I fear," said she, the

serenity and peacefulness of an innocent heart beaming from her gentle eyes, "the living God, and none but him." The impression of terror that the count had received left deeper traces. That heart, so intrepid in battle, was not equally resolved against the forebodings of superstition; a weakness against which, by a singular inconsequence, the incredulity of those who believe themselves bold, because they are presumptuous, does not always protect them. Despite of the suggestions of his reason, the sinistrous augury troubled his present enjoyment, and rose before his mental vision like a dark and threatening cloud on the horizon of his future bliss. But Thomasine now felt the necessity of rejoining her father. At the moment of quitting La Cesia she held forth to him her hand, which he pressed to his heart; nor did

she make any great effort to withdraw it. He slowly and pensively turned to the boat that was to bear him from her; but had not proceeded but a step or two, when he sprang back again, his eye sparkling and his countenance on fire, as if some violent and irresistible impulse had taken sudden and entire possession of him.

"Thomasine," he cried aloud, "if I quit you now, I shall lose you for ever; I feel but too sadly assured of this. What wait we for? you love me, your innocent candour has just now made the avowal, what more is required to render us happy? Follow me—your lover, your husband!" He pressed her in his arms as he spoke, and began to draw her towards the boat. But there is a moral power in virtue to which physical force must always yield; nor is virtue ever disarmed until it becomes a traitor to itself. The daughter of the marquis hastily broke from the arms that were twined around her, and regarding the count with one of those almost superhuman looks of dignity that com-

mand instantaneous respect, she said—"Unhappy man, whence this frenzy? and what would thou do with her that thou lovest, were she weak enough to forget her duty and to follow thy counsels?"

These few words, but much more the air that accompanied them, produced an instantaneous effect on the count; he was silent and troubled: but though he felt the reasonableness of the appeal, his dark, yet ardent look still retained its expression of passion and despair. As he again withdrew she lifted up her hands, and eyes now filled with tears, to heaven, and said to him—"Cesia, let us hope for better days; but above all things, let us strive to deserve them."

He answered not; but casting himself into the boat, he pushed from the land, while Thomasine retired to the palace. She turned not to look on the bark of the count; but every beat of his receding oars smote deeply and mournfully on her saddened heart.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE CARBONARO.

A

PIEDMONTESE TALE.

BY

THE DUKE DE LEVIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE CARBONARO.

CHAPTER I.

THE Piedmontese insurrection was now completely put down: the Austrian government had for the present recovered its confidence; but the future still alarmed it, and not without reason, for it was easy to be seen that its Italian subjects were ready to profit by the very first opportunity of shaking off a yoke which they detested. As it was quite impossible to watch a whole nation which was animated by such a

spirit, the government limited its efforts to narrowly observing the conduct of those persons who, by their rank, their fortune, or their talents, could exercise any influence over their countrymen. Unhappily precautions of this kind, which the necessity of self-preservation to a certain degree justify, can never be put in practice without an accompanying host of vexatious acts on the part of the police agents, whose interest it always is to alarm the government, in order to increase the importance of their office, and thus entitle their zeal to distinction and reward.

Among the principal agents in the administration in the north-west provinces of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, a certain M. de Steinman occupied the most important place. Steinman was an active and intelligent man, not destitute of capacity for business; but he was rather cunning than penetrating; in his natural temper

vain and proud; but from calculation supple and complaisant even to meanness, when his least interest was at stake.

At the period of the first congress of Vienna Steinman, who had no means of existence, and had been petitioning for a long time for a situation which he was unable to procure, thought that the best way to obtain the favour of the Austrian government would be to compose a pamphlet on the rights, or rather the pretensions, of the emperor to the supremacy of Germany, which Steinman supported to the best of his powers. The pamphlet finished by a pompous eulogy on the absolute paternal power in opposition to the representative system, an English invention, altogether inapplicable on the continent, and the fashion of which would doubtless pass away. The pamphlet succeeded, and its author was appointed to a subordinate

employment in the police of Lombardy. He managed it with zeal and ability, and speedily rose to a higher office. Ambitious and avaricious as the man was, he could not however rest contented with his station: he was desirous at all hazards to obtain wealth and power; and as he could not reproach himself with having in any one instance sacrificed his interest to his conscience, he was irritated to think that a man of so much wit and so few scruples should be verging on forty without any fortune than what arose from a small appointment in the police. "Ah!" exclaimed he, "could I get to one of those good places in the taxes where there is a snug salary, and a few of those odds and ends that fools term unlawful, I might soon secure a comfortable livelihood for the rest of my days." But while he regretted the time he had lost, he did not neglect any occasion of

strengthening the confidence which his superiors began to repose in him. He judged properly that he had a chance of deriving some advantage from the piled-up documents in the archives of the police, touching the existence of secret societies in almost all the corners of Lombardy. None of those societies had, it is true, disturbed the public peace, but they were not the less ready to rise on that account the instant that the Piedmontese army had passed the Tesino; and what proved beyond question the reality of those embryo plots was, the disappearance from their homes of a number of persons of consequence, whose opinions had been suspected, immediately after the suppression of the insurrection. It was obvious that, imagining themselves compromised in it, the most guilty and the most timid had passed the frontiers, while others less deeply engaged had

concealed themselves at home until the storm had blown over. Whilst Steinman was engaged in examining and comparing those documents, he received notice that Baron Sforzali, a member of the ephemeral chamber of the *Possidenti*, one of the wealthiest and most influential persons of his party, who had been supposed to have sought shelter in Spain, was in reality residing at the house of his old friend, the Count de S——a, under the disguise of a journeyman gardener. If any one had the clue of all these political intrigues, assuredly Sforzali was the person; and the arrest of such a criminal could not fail to lead to most important discoveries. Steinman attached so great importance to this arrest, that he resolved to make in person a journey to Cadenabbia, the residence of Count S——a; and there, on pretence of gratifying his curiosity, for that

beautiful seat was full of master-pieces both of ancient and modern art, he calculated on making so exact an examination as should render it impossible for any one to escape his attention. He was the more certain of this, that he was to be assisted by his principal agent, Mister Schelme, whom he termed his Argus, and who had indeed acquired some sort of title to that glorious appellation. If, in fact, he had not quite so many eyes as the Argus of the fable, he could make use of those that nature had vouchsafed him with such rapidity, that he seemed to have the faculty of multiplying them at pleasure. No one was more skilled in physiognomy than he; and he could give to his own with equal facility the expression of menace or of allurement, according as his purpose happened to be intimidation or seduction. His sight was sharp and clear, his ear fine; and

to these physical advantages he joined the most precious moral qualifications for exercising successfully his honourable profession. Insinuating, wheedling, an ingenious falsifier, a bold hypocrite, his light gossip amused young people and females; yet could he change his tone and melt even to tears with the unfortunate wretch whom he wished to entrap, all the while grinning with satanic delight at the success of his infernal tricks. He was, in fact, an active, bold, and zealous servant, provided always he were well paid. I need not ask in what country, whether monarchical or republican, such a man would not be regarded as the pearl of his profession? or in what spot, at this moment, the slightest scruple would be manifested in employing such distinguished talents!

It was in prison, we must tell the truth, that Steinman made the fortunate acquisition of

this personage; but it would be an error to impugn his ability because of that misfortune. Power, every one knows, is here to-day and there to-morrow; and none of the countless multitudes that wage a war of spoliation on their neighbours' goods, from the sneaking thief who limits his ambition to prigging a pocket-handkerchief up to the robber who plunders provinces and kingdoms, is altogether exempt from the rigour and caprices to which fortune subjects the most successful. The fact was, Schelme had got implicated in an unlucky criminal attempt, but not from the treason of his associates; a danger which is so much the rarer of the two, that it is much less to be guarded against in the associations of avowed rogues than is treachery among those who call themselves honest men. So at least says the proverb, which I shall not repeat. In Schelme's

case the proofs were so clear and incontrovertible, that the least that the culprit could look forward to was one or other of the following issues :—

1. Pillory and whipping.

2. The galleys for some twenty years.

3. If the judge were inclined to act rigorously, the gallows.

A delightful choice, it must be allowed. Happily for Schelme, political police was a little concerned in the case, and Steinman was singularly struck by the presence of mind and talent he displayed in his responses. He examined him privately respecting his former life, his connexions, his projects; and he found in him so much intelligence and acuteness, so marked a superiority over the dull-heads that had been sent to him from Vienna, that he resolved to attach him to his office. He pro-

cured for him a conditional pardon; and began by intrusting him with some delicate commissions, which he managed satisfactorily; and, in a word, at the end of three months, Steinman could not stir a step without his newly-acquired assistant, who acted as his secretary, his head clerk, his aide-de-camp—in fact, as his prime favourite.

In order to make a circuit of the Lake of Como, Steinman hired one of those boats that are covered with an awning, and which are used in parties and voyages during the summer. He calculated on halting during his progress at the Villa d'Este, where the Queen of England, who was as heedless as she was licentious in her conduct, was in the habit of receiving with marked favour all those persons who were distinguished for their hostility to the government. He had in charge to

communicate to the individual who exercised so scandalous an influence over the queen, that the sovereigns of Europe, and all princes of what quarter soever, being influenced naturally by the best of all possible intentions, it was not to those exalted persons; but to such as abused their confidence, that any fault of their governments was to be attributed; and that, in consequence, his imperial and royal majesty had determined to send Mister Baron B. to pass the summer in one of his strong towers, if her majesty the queen continued to give to the court of Vienna such just subject of displeasure as she had done. This mission completed, Steinman was to continue his route, and he would still leave ample time to arrive at an early hour at Cadenabbia: accident, however, deranged his plans.

He was just about to embark when a mes-

senger from Milan brought him dispatches, which it was necessary to answer: this stopped him several hours; and when at length he was at liberty to set out, the east wind, which is as uniform in those places as the sea-breeze of the tropics, had already begun to blow with even more than its customary violence. As it was directly in their teeth, the boatmen were obliged to stretch for the south shore, which at that particular spot is more sheltered, and the visit to the Villa d'Este was necessarily postponed until his return.

This impediment, and the slowness of their progress, was extremely displeasing to Steinmann; and having arrived off Ponte le Blevio, and seeing by his watch that it was already two o'clock, he impatiently exclaimed—"These rascals make no progress; we shall not get to the end of our journey to-day."

" If you were in a hurry," said the boatman in the bow, to whom the observation was obliquely addressed, without at all putting himself about, " you ought to have taken four oars, as all the people that visit Cadenabbia do, unless indeed it be a few Germans."

The Austrian coloured with anger; for he was so well aware of the custom of employing four boatmen, that he calculated on paying the expenses of his jaunt by employing but two. The answer of the boatman sounded to his ear as a reproach, and, rude as he was in his anger, he raised his gold-headed cane to strike him.

" This oar," said he, brandishing the stick, and curling his brow at the same time, " when well applied to such shoulders as thine, is an admirable means of augmenting the activity of those who, like thee, are inclined to be lazy."

Travellers that have visited that country

must have remarked, that the boatmen on the lakes are in general robust and agile fellows; they are tall in person, and exhibit an air of independence which contrasts very remarkably with the crouching and humble aspect of the natives of central Italy. The man on whom Steinman sought to fasten this truly German quarrel had, besides, served for two years on the lake, on board the guard-flotilla, during the campaigns of Bonaparte. He instantly drew from the water his long oar, and putting himself in a posture of defence, with a tone in which contempt was mingled with anger, and with a bitter smile playing round his lip, exclaimed—"Your cane, like the person that bears it, would scare the fishes at most."

Steinman, foaming with rage, sprung upon the thwart in order to employ his weapon with more advantage; but an unforeseen accident

prevented the parties from coming to blows. The boatman in the stern, who steered the boat, at the same time that he assisted in propelling her, and who participated in the indignation of his companion, perceiving a-head of them a pointed rock on a level with the water, drove the bow of the shallop against it with so much violence, and at the same time with so much address, that he knocked a hole in its side. The shock was so violent, that Steinman lost his balance, and tumbled into the water: as to Schelme, he caught hold of the supports of the awning, and thus avoided a fall; but he could not believe himself in safety when he saw the water pouring in through the seam which the stroke had opened in the slim boarding of the vessel. There was, however, no real danger; for at that part the lake was so low, that it was not above three or four feet in

depth, and they were not above fifty yards' distance from the dry land of the Palace of Varèze. Schelme seeing his patron direct his course thither did not hesitate for a moment to join him, and leaped lightly over the side of the boat for that purpose, at the same time that the boatmen removed towards the stern a portion of the stones which they used as ballast, and both taking their stand there, disengaged the prow of the vessel, and vigorously plying their scoops, contrived in that way to keep it afloat. In this awkward plight they slowly withdrew, cursing the scrubs as they left them, and hallooing after them with cries of mockery. Their boat, it is true, was damaged, and it would require some money to refit it; and they had besides lost their fare; but then they were revenged! And the irresistible attractions that the English or Dutch

[illegible] fails in the grasp of his schedam, the Italian fails in the mild genius of his revenge. Any one of these is as natural a taste as another, and every man pleases itself in those matters.

Our two Germans were kindly received on their landing by the servants of the Marquis of Varese, who had witnessed the mischance from the window of the dining-room, where he was just about to sit down to table, and who had sent to the assistance of the shipwrecked travellers. No sooner had Schelme reached the dry land than he gave himself a shake, after the fashion of some shaggy spaniel when it has dipped to the bottom of a pool for the stone that had been thrown in by its master, and walked away with as much ease as if nothing unpleasant had happened. His companion in misfortune did not carry it off so easily. His progress

was as much embarrassed as that of a post-boy stuck in his jack-boots. Those which he wore had, indeed, nothing uncommon either in shape or weight; but the special regard that he had of his health having led him to wear water-proof leather, the consequence was that the liquid that had once got in could find no road out again, each leg was immersed in at least a couple of quarts; and it was only by leaning on the arm of Schelme with the one hand, and on his gold-headed cane with the other, that he contrived to gain the porch of the palace.

The marquis was chained to his chair by the gout, and Thomasine, in consequence, came forward to receive the unexpected guests. Notwithstanding her generally sympathising disposition, and although she was much less disposed to ridicule than most young people

of her age, yet she could not refrain from a smile on beholding them. The figure of Steinman, especially, was extremely grotesque; he was dripping from the head to the heels: his frogged camlet great-coat clipped him round like a strait-waistcoat; his thick matted hair of pale brown, or flaxen hue rather, gave to his head somewhat of the appearance of a large swollen-up frog; and at every step that he took there was a squash from the water that sought, but in vain, to escape from its prison-house. I know not how it comes about, but there is always something ridiculous in the appearance of a person when soused with water. Conceive the gravest magistrate, the most august prince, the general of the most stern aspect, and every one of them shall have a pitiful and silly look after getting a ducking. It must be admitted that the exterior dignity

of a man depends on small matters; and yet what a store does vanity set by it!

Steinman, on entering the dining-room, endeavoured to compensate by the importance of his tone and of his behaviour for the disadvantage consequent on his condition. "My lord marquis," said he with a grave air, "the man whom you see before you in this sorry plight is, nevertheless, a civil officiary of high standing in the administration of the Lombardo-Venetian government, and at this moment engaged in matters of state police under the orders of his imperial highness the archduke viceroy. My name is Steinman, and this is M. Schelme, a gentleman also belonging to the executive.

"We have," he proceeded, "been swamped: the awkwardness and insolence of our boatmen, which I shall not fail to punish, prevent us

from pursuing our route; and I am come to request from you, as I well may from a loyal subject of his majesty the emperor and king, such means of transport as are at your disposal."

"To-night," replied the old marquis with his accustomed politeness, "I have none to offer you. My boat is at Como, and my pleasure shallop is in the hands of the carpenter, but it will be ready at an early hour to-morrow. My boatmen are steady fellows, and they shall then be at your command. In the meanwhile you must dine with me, and pass the night here; but before any thing be done, you must change your dress, you require it." Steinman was of the same opinion, and he proceeded for that purpose into another room, where his boots were pulled off; a process which produced an inundation, the recollection of which yet

serves to amuse the servants at Blevio. He was then equipped with a gold-laced suit of the marquis's, which the latter was in the habit of wearing on gala-days; but which, as Steinman was much stouter than the old man, appeared on him like a fancy hunting-jacket. The breeches, from the same cause, did not reach the knee; but notwithstanding this, he did not do the less justice to the marquis's dinner.

When they rose from table Steinman appeared to regret extremely that he could not pursue his journey immediately; the purpose of which, according to his description of it, was of the highest importance. "A great deal is said," he observed with an air of disdain, "of the beauty of your lake and of its environs. It may appear beautiful to a parcel of Englishmen who are wearied of their own country, and who do not know what to do with their money, or

to lazy tourists who linger in transport at every fine view they meet with, but it is impossible that reasonable people should admire a country where communication is impossible. Why, egad! we are as completely shut up here as at Venice, where you cannot stir from one house to another without a gondola. Patience, however, patience. Come next year, we shall have a military road opened, from Lecca up the Adda, all the way to the emperor's hereditary states. I have seen the plans of the work, and they are superb. It will cost a pretty penny; two or three millions of florins at least. But," he added, with a hoarse laugh of more noise than wit, "you are warm folks, you gentlemen of Lombardy; you can easily afford to furnish the means of such an improvement, and of many more than that."

"Sir," replied the marquis somewhat tartly,

" when people are called on to pay the half of their income to the state, and when the market for their produce is at the same time hermetically sealed against them, as it is at present, it is impossible to be rich:—we are poor, sir, very poor. For my part, I never was reduced to such straits."

" That is rather unfortunate, certainly," replied the Austrian in a careless tone; " but what is to be done, marquis? The emperor must pay his gallant troops; they cannot live on air, you'll grant that. It is equally necessary for his majesty to provide for the civilians that he employs; and their wages are not excessive, I can answer for it. The only objection that is urged by some persons is, that the army that occupies the country might be somewhat reduced; but experience has shown the fallacy of that opinion. It is not three months past since it was

plain to every one that we had not enough of troops here. Yes, yes, it is impossible to be certain of any thing, unless you have plenty of soldiers, plenty of officers, and plenty of military roads; I will not give up that to any man. It is in that way that victors have at all times acted, in order to compel the submission of the people they conquered. The Romans, for instance;"—here M. Steinman drew himself up and put on a learned air;—"was it not they who constructed those magnificent causeways whose very remains still attest the greatness of their power and the wisdom of their policy?"

"No, sir," replied the marquis in a lively tone of voice, when he found himself thus placed on his favourite ground where, besides, he reckoned on finding arguments in support of his just complaints; "the Romans, sir, after the example of the Carthaginians; for you are probably

aware that it is to the Africans we owe the invention of paved-ways, as Isidorus, in his *Origines*, book 15. chapter the last, informs us: the Romans, I say, entered upon many grand undertakings of that kind; but, sir, they never opened any communications that were not indispensable. In Lombardy here, for instance, you will find no *via*, but the *Blandia Augusta Veronensis*, which was a branch of the *Æmilia Parmensis*; it went up the banks of the Athesis, or, as we now term it, the Adige, to the pass that leads through the Tyrolese Alps to the Danube, near to *Augusta Vindelicorum*. But neither the Romans nor any of their successors ever dreamed of constructing useless and expensive roads on the broken and precipitous shores of the Benacus,* or of our Larium.† It was only on the

* Lago di Garda. † Como.

plain that these roads were formed, where the *Via Gallica*, or *Posthumia*, joined the Milanese with the territory of the *Veneti*. Such, at least, are the only roads noticed by writers on these subjects, and no others appear in the Itinerarium of Antoninus, or in Peutinger's Chart."

The mention of the name of Peutinger, whose termination betrayed its High-Dutch extraction, came like music on the ear of Steinman. There is a charm in every thing connected with the country of our birth that exalts the mind of the noblest and the greatest, and even the most base are not insensible to its influence.

"That Peutinger," interrupted the Austrian *employé*, "was a brave German, a learned man, was he not?"

"He is universally looked on as respectable authority. I have just at hand, somewhere

here, an excellent edition of his work, which I shall show you."

"Don't trouble yourself," replied Steinman, "who had been alarmed by the small specimen already vouchsafed him of the marquis's erudition; "you would never manage to get at the book in the midst of all that mass of papers that is heaped on your bureau. God forgive us, they are enow of them to fit out a conspiracy."

The word conspiracy, to which Steinman at the moment attached no important meaning, did not produce the less marked effect on the countenance of the old marquis. Timid from disposition, and easily alarmed on slight occasions, he immediately suspected some allusion to his former connexion with the enemies of the government, or to his more recent services to La Cesia; and as the man who made it

was a superior officer of police, he gave himself up for a lost man. A deadly paleness covered his cheeks, and his confusion was so perceptible, that Schelme touched the knee of his master in order to make him attend to it. Thomasine, who also perceived her father's trouble, thought it best to join in the conversation, in order to give her father time to recover possession of himself.

" Those gentlemen," said she, " see nothing but plots wherever they turn their eyes ; it is their trade. It is but just that they should inspect our papers. Here is a dissertation on a species of tiling lately discovered at Orbitello. This large roll contains a description of the handle of an Etruscan vase. This bundle of letters is the correspondence of the secretary of the Studiosi dell' Antichita of Bologna—."

" And this sheet, covered over with singular

characters, which you seem so anxious to conceal from our sight," said Sebelme, maliciously taking hold of a paper which indeed Thomasine had placed below the others, "will you be so good as to tell us what it means?"

"Sir," replied she hastily, "we have nothing to conceal, but I wished to avoid a word of so difficult pronunciation as *boustroph—boustrophid*—you must assist me, father."

"Your memory is very short, Thomasine," replied the marquis, "it is a fac-simile of a *boustrophemonian* MS. This description of writing is very rarely found on monuments, for it ceased to be commonly used so far back as the time of Solon: its peculiarity consists in this, that the lines run alternately from left to right and from right to left, precisely as the oxen trace the furrows, and from that resemblance it received its name of *boustrophemon*. This spe-

which I received from the learned Abbate Mai, together with a piece of Palimpsest MS.

"You will perceive," continued Thomasine, "that there is no ground for suspicion in all this, any more than there is in this large roll on the sofa, which is a copy of a marble at the Villa Pliniana."

Steinman would not allow her to finish. "My pretty miss," said he, with as much impudence as gallantry, "such a pleader as you are might successfully defend the worst cause, but it is superfluous to enter on a justification of the noble marquis. I am very far from suspecting," added he, "that so honourable a gentleman, and one who performs the duties of hospitality so handsomely, has mixed himself up with any criminal intrigue. I am merely surprised that a simple word should have so much disconcerted him. Other

men under such circumstances might indulge suspicions, but for me I would not for the world give any uneasiness to so worthy a family."

The marquis, restored to confidence by these kind expressions, said, that if he had appeared somewhat confused it was attributable solely to the delicate state of his health, which rendered him subject to a kind of fainting fits. He had not the slightest wish, indeed he was most anxious that the officers should inspect the whole of his papers with the utmost rigidness. "You will find among them," added the old man, "the fruits of five-and-thirty years of study, which I am bold to say has not been altogether thrown away in the advancement of science. I have ever been a stranger to politics, and from my literary inclinations, as well as from my peaceful disposition, the declared

enemy of all commotions. I wish, for the happiness of my country, that every one thought as I do on these matters."

"Well said," exclaimed Steinman; "these are the words of a wise man. Continue to amuse yourself with the ancients, and leave our Holy Alliance to settle the moderns, and every thing will go on swimmingly. But come, Schelme, let us leave the marquis and his charming daughter to their repose. To-morrow at break of day we shall continue our voyage in the shallop, which he has been kind enough to say he will lend us."

The travellers were then conducted with all due ceremony to the apartment which had been prepared for their reception. Schelme, whose glance was more piercing than that of his companion, had remarked not only the confusion of the father, but he observed that Thomasine

also was not without uneasiness, even when she pretended least to feel it; she even gave some very marked and suspicious signals to her father.

"Who will deny," said he, rubbing his hands, "that fortune smiles on us? While we are running after conspirators, that after all may slip through our fingers, here are others who come forward and offer themselves to us. If you will be guided by me, sir, when we get to Como, we shall have an attentive perusal of the great secret register, at the article Varèze; there is no doubt his name will be down, as those of all the nobles are. We shall thus learn his connexions and his past conduct; and with these data I pledge my word I'll make him tell all he knows. I must have a laugh by anticipation at the terror the poor old man will not fail to exhibit when I begin, in the tone

you know I can adopt, to tell him about prisons and dungeons, and, to clinch the matter, about scaffolds. Oh! I'll answer for it his daughter will be in a pretty fright."

"By-the-bye, Schelme, is not she a nice girl? as blooming as a German—such eyes, and such an expression!"

"Psha! you have seen nothing of her yet," replied the worthy, with the grin of a tiger, and a look that painted the wickedness of his heart; "she will be infinitely more interesting when she comes with tears in her eyes to entreat us to save her father. Egad, I don't know how we shall resist her. But come, sleep is a safe counsellor; we shall see to-morrow." These words uttered, the two worthy gentlemen wished each other good night, and in a few minutes they were in a sound sleep, which they continued to enjoy peacefully and undisturbedly until the

dawn. Close to them, and under the same roof, lay two virtuous souls, who passed in watchful uneasiness a long night disturbed alike by sickness and sorrow. But there is a day of compensation approaching, when all these accounts will be balanced—the great day of general retribution—a long day, for it will be limited only by eternity.

CHAPTER II.

THE person supposed to be concealed in the house of Count de S——a was not there, and it was even doubtful if he ever had been there. The police are often abused by false intelligence communicated by the enemies of government, or by persons who seek merely to amuse themselves at their expense. As soon as Steinman and Schelme had returned to Como, they began, as they had previously determined, to inquire into the affairs of the

Marquis Varèze, and the register was accordingly consulted. The following were the notices that it presented:

"Varèze (Ambrosio Agostino di Solatto), marquis, descended from one of the oldest and most respectable families in the north of Lombardy, aged about sixty-six; a rich landholder; possesses extensive property to the east of the Lago Maggiore, near to Casciago; believed to have monies in the English funds.

"Character—weak, timid, vain of his rank, hostile to liberal opinions, but not the less an enemy to the Austrian government, whose fall he secretly desires. Under all the circumstances attending the revolution, he conducted himself with circumspection; and since 1815, nothing has been discovered in his correspondence, which is extensive, that does not relate to subjects of art and antiquities. He lives very

retired, passing the greater part of the year with his daughter in his palace at Blevio, on the Lake of Como. No one is in the habit of visiting them but his relation, Count Sospoli, who appears to exercise a great influence over him. (Vide Sospoli.)"

On referring to the article indicated, Count Sospoli was found to be described as a dangerous person, whom it was proper to watch strictly; that he had a nephew who had been heard to boast that his uncle had had the ingenuity to extract for the use of the secret societies the sum of ten thousand francs from the most cowardly old man in Como; which description could hardly apply to any one but to the Marquis Varèze. He had added, continued the statement, that it was to him that the sum was handed over: the fact was never, however, investigated; because the count, dreading an

arrest, had set out unexpectedly for Spain along with his nephew, who had there entered into one of the Italian corps that were levied by the cortès.

Under these circumstances, Schelmo insisted on returning to Blevio. "What do we risk?" said he to Steinman; "if nothing be discovered, still our journey will furnish matter for a report which will prove to the administration the activity of your zeal; but every circumstance serves to convince me that by practising a little address we may come to the knowledge of some important secrets. You may depend on it they were in the grand plot, both the father and daughter. With all her airs of candour, she is a very cunning one, that Miss Thomasine. I could wager that it was she who managed the arrangements with the nephew of Count Sospoli, while the poor old marquis was think-

ing more of his antipathies than of politics."—

"Any thing is quite possible," replied Steinman, shrugging at the idea of seeing Thomasine again; "but I only just made a deep impression on his heart, and at worst the visit presents no difficulty."

Two days after they set out Steinman, who was anxious to do away the impression produced by his former awkward entrance into Bevio, and to appear with every possible advantage to its inmates, had dressed himself in his most fashionable suit. His blue frock, with its large gilt buttons and red collar, and his scarlet waistcoat, had a sort of middle place between the civil and military habit. His three-cornered hat turned up à la Prussienne gave him an almost martial air, and his water-proof boots, which were newly polished, some have a looking-glass. We believe we forgot to state

that in person Steinman was tall, but ill-shaped; his shoulders were square and high, his neck short and somewhat awry, his face flat, his eyes of a pale blue, and inclined to a squint. There was little in this assemblage of features to attract attention; and yet, thanks to a certain swaggering and bold air, he had been successful with several females whose tastes were not over fastidious. His conquests were not indeed very flattering, but they did not the less add to the good opinion he entertained of his personal attractions. On his arrival he saluted the marquis with an easy air, and told him that an affair of importance having led him to that side of the lake, he did not wish to pass Blevio without offering his thanks to its amiable inmates for the reception they had given him at his former visit. This compliment, accompanied by a smile, which he endeavoured

to render as gallant as possible, was particularly addressed to Thomasine, who, however, replied to it in the coldest and most reserved terms. The old nobleman kept Steinman to dinner, and even pressed him to prolong his stay until next day. Fear more than politeness, we must confess, dictated these obliging invitations; for he would have willingly learned that their object was at the bottom of the lake, or a hundred miles off.

During dinner nothing of interest occurred; the only conversation that passed respected the new theatre at the Villa d'Este, which had been opened the previous evening, when the Queen of England appeared on the stage, along with several members of the Bergami family. After dinner, Steinman, assuming all at once a grave and stern aspect, said—

"You must not be surprised, marquis, that I

am grieved and hurt, and the additional obligations that you have just conferred on me afflict me most deeply. Dispatches arrived yesterday from Milan, which state that the Austrian government intend to abandon their plans of mildness and forbearance, which, in fact, have hitherto served only to engender ingratitude and to harden offenders. They have at length resolved to employ the most severe measures: they wish to know what they have to depend upon; and they will especially visit those persons who, by their exalted rank, should give an example of obedience, if not of fidelity."

Such a preamble froze the old man with terror. From the first visit of the police-officers he had never been wholly without uneasiness; he was silent, however, but his left leg, which was the weaker of the two, began to shake as

if he had been seized with a severe shivering fit. After a considerable pause the Austrian, elevating his voice and assuming an interrogative tone, went on—

"Come to the point, marquis; reply to my questions. Is it long since you had any news of Count Sospoli? Where is he now? You must know that the government of his majesty are anxious to get possession of his person, and of the persons of his accomplices."

The name of Sospoli produced as terrible an effect on the poor old man as if a thunderbolt had dropped at the foot of his chair. He grew pale, he reddened, tried to answer, stammered out some unintelligible words, but he could no more. As the poet describes it, *vox faucibus hæsit.* His situation was indeed deplorable: yet far from manifesting the slight-

est compassion for him, Schelme, grinning maliciously on Thomasine, observed, "I am afraid, miss, your papa is suffering at this moment under one of those fainting fits to which he told us the other day he was subject!"

A look of mingled indignation and contempt was the only answer vouchsafed him; but Schelme, who was now irritated in his turn, continued the attack; and making use, for the purpose of ensnaring and alarming his victim, of the unhappy talent that he possessed of uttering a falsehood with all the appearance of sincerity and truth—"Why," said he, "take so much pains to conceal matters from us when every particular is known and confessed? We have the proofs of guilt in our hands. Nay, we have more; it was but last night that the young officer was seized." "What! seized La Ces—?" exclaimed Tho-

masine, in a tone of piercing anguish, and sunk lifeless on the floor. Her father endeavoured to sustain her, but he was too feeble for the purpose; and she would have dragged him down in her fall had not Steinman come to his assistance. This scene of desolating grief appeared to produce an impression on him which could hardly have been expected from his known disposition, and from the habitual harshness with which he exercised the duties of his office. The change, however, that it wrought was altogether superficial; it did not originate in any sentiment of humanity; his sensibility had been excited by the charms of Thomasine. He said to her in a tone of compassion, when she recovered her senses, "Compose yourself, miss; there is no cause for despair in all this. The crime committed by the marquis, your father, is not a capital one;

and even were it so, there are infallible modes of obtaining mercy of the infinite clemency of his imperial majesty. All that your father has to do is to abjure connexion with the enemies of Austria; and the only pledge of his sincerity required will be a full confession of all the persons he knows to be implicated, and of their criminal designs. Come, sir, go on with your confession, we are ready to receive it."

The marquis blushed when he heard these words addressed to him: there was a principle of honour in his heart, timid though it was, and his soul was generous, but indifferently served, or rather domineered over by frail organs; yet irritated by so direct an insult as a proposal of such infamous conduct was, he replied with considerable heat—"My conscience accuses me of no crime; but if what has been imputed to me be considered as such,

I know how to suffer alone; no one shall ever reproach me with dragging him into the abyss along with me."

"This is talking too high," replied Schelme, "when we have the proofs of your having given ten thousand francs to Count Sospoli."

"I may lend my money to a friend without being accountable for the improper use to which he may put it," said the marquis; "it belongs to my accusers to prove that I lent it with a criminal intention."

"I am willing to believe that your conduct has been irreproachable; but how am I, on such a supposition, to explain the extraordinary emotion of your daughter when she was informed of the arrest of her youthful accomplice?"

"And why should she not take a lively interest in the fate of a wounded and unfor-

tunate kinsman whom we received here when he was abandoned and a fugitive? The cares that we had to bestow on him for several weeks only endeared him to us the more."

On hearing these words Schelme started with surprise, and Steinman remained speechless. Both of them saw in a moment the mistake into which they had fallen; for the circumstances of which the marquis spoke could not in any respect apply to young Sospoli, who had never been either wounded or a fugitive.

After a moment's reflection Steinman recovered himself, and addressing the old nobleman, went on—"What you have this moment declared merits the greatest attention; and it grieves me to state to you, it very much aggravates the difficulties of the situation in

which you were already placed. To the charge of having given money for the purpose of encouraging rebellion in the country, is now to be added the crime confessed by yourself of having given shelter and protection to a proscript; and that without giving the slightest intimation to the authorities, as the laws and the police regulations so expressly order.

"When I came here I frankly confess I was completely ignorant of the fact you have just announced: I only knew what concerned Count Sospoli and his nephew."

"Then it is young Sospoli that has been arrested?" interrupted Thomasine, gasping with anxiety to hear the answer to her interrogatory.

"There has been nobody arrested at all," said Schelme; "that was a mere trick of the

trade. Now, however, we have some hopes of arresting the important personage that you have indicated."

"It is necessary, it is indeed indispensable," said Steinman, interrupting his assistant in a tone of hypocritical mildness, "that the marquis—his own interest demands it—should explain. Let him but give us the name and some traces of the person whom he received so imprudently, and I shall take on my own responsibility to receive the declaration, tardy though it be, as if it had been made within the period prescribed by the *ordonnance*."

If Thomasine had entertained the slightest apprehension of her father's steadiness, she would not have scrupled to interpose for the purpose of preventing the secret of her lover from being betrayed; but she entertained no such fear; nor did the marquis disappoint her,

for he calmly and in a dignified manner replied—" I cannot possibly satisfy your curiosity, sir; and I am willing to judge of M. Steinman with so much kindness, as to believe that, in my situation, he would act as I do."

" Your situation!" cried Schelme, impudently, " foregad! it is a very indifferent one. This display of obstinacy may lead you a long way from home, marquis, perhaps as far as Venice. There is an ancient convent of St. Michael there, where all the state-prisoners are at this moment assembled and waiting for judgment. The convent stands on an island in the midst of the *lagunes;* it is well secured, I assure you: the windows are double-grated. You will pass your time very pleasantly there, that is, if the government do not re-establish, as it is said they have some intention of doing, the famous prison of the *plombei*, which, in faith, I think

they were by far too hasty in destroying;—that station would be a little hottish in summer, and make you feel the loss of the cool breeze of the lake here. The only thing that puzzles me is what the deuce they will do with Miss Thomasine; I don't think it was usual to shut up women in the *piombi*, and I rather doubt whether the delicacy of their constitution could bear the temperature of the air."*

* The *piombi*, a state-prison of a most odious character and history, on the top of the palace of the doge at Venice, was destroyed on the same day on which the ancient republic fell; as well as the famous lions' heads, whose mouths were used for receiving anonymous accusations. Schelmo calumniated the Austrian government when he imputed to them the project of reviving these horrible cells; they never thought of such a thing. It is true the Bridge of Sighs; a covered-way leading across the canal, which separates the palaces from the court where the high tribunal sits, still remains; but the only sinister particular

The marquis sustained this terrible menace with sufficient firmness, so long as it went merely to affect himself; but the idea of being separated from his daughter, or of seeing her buried in a horrible dungeon, was too much for his feeble frame to bear: he burst into tears, and gave himself up to all the outward symptoms of despair, while Thomasine clasped him in her arms, exclaiming, while her words were interrupted with tears and sobs, "No, my dear father, death, and nothing but death, shall separate us!"

So lovely did she appear at that moment, and

about that bridge is its name, which adds nothing to the sufferings of the prisoners. A communication similar in every respect has always existed, and still exists at Genoa, between the palace of the doge and the prison, yet no one ever thought of reproaching the authorities for suffering it: it was a matter of security and not of tyranny.—*Note of the French editor.*

so affecting was her grief, that Steinman could not help rebuking Schelme for the harshness that he had used in thus adding to the anguish of the accused.

"Sir," said he to the marquis, "I will give you time to reflect coolly on these matters. Two days hence I shall return for your answer. In the mean time, I must not compromise the interests of the state, and I must have your word of honour that you will remain here."

"And how can he do otherwise," replied the weeping Thomasine, "in the condition to which you have reduced him?"

"I wish with all my soul," replied Steinman, in a honied tone, "that I were allowed to soften the rigours of my professional duty." So saying, he gave a sign to Schelme to follow him, and left the house, imagining, with great

reason, that he could not at that moment do any thing that was more agreeable to Thomasine.

During the whole of the passage Steinman appeared plunged in thought. In vain did Schelme repeatedly attempt to induce him to talk about the family of Varèze, he only replied by a yes or a no; and when he landed, he dismissed his follower abruptly, saying he would see him next day. The latter, however, insisted on being heard then. "The matter," said he, "on which I wish to speak to you is of the utmost importance, and it requires instant attention; it concerns you directly."

"Well, then," said Steinman, "come in; but be brief."

Schelme followed into his closet, and after shutting the door—"Sir," said he, "I am too much attached to you to allow you to let slip an opportunity, perhaps the only one that may

ever present itself, without taking advantage of it, to acquire without labour and without danger what twenty years of hard service will scarcely insure to you.—What do you mean by that waive of your hand? You will thus far at least do me justice as to suppose that I do not intend to propose to you any thing contrary to your duty. I know your principles too well, and I myself——."

"What is the use of all this preamble?—explain what you mean."

"Why, in the first place, I beg you to remark that the government has no interest in prosecuting the Marquis Varèze, an infirm and timorous old man, who cannot possibly present to it any occasion of uneasiness, and who would only cumber to no purpose the prison of St. Michael. This granted—I observe, in the second place, that this old man is wealthy; that he

has cash which he knows not what to do with, and that he would willingly part with it to him who should extricate him from his present difficulties and restore him to security. I cannot be supposed to know what he might come down for that piece of service; but with so considerable a fortune as his, it would not be too much to reckon on a hundred thousand francs in ready money, or in good bills payable at sight. Now it strikes me that such a sum would be infinitely better in your purse than in his."

"A hundred thousand francs," said Steinman, hesitatingly; "that would be a pretty penny, doubtless; but such compromises are of a very ticklish character. I don't say that one may not accept a gift -a voluntary one I mean —under certain circumstances."

"Certainly," replied Schelme, who saw that

his patron was only puzzled as to the form under which his proposition should be carried into execution; "certainly, under certain circumstances, a gift may be accepted. If the object were to save from the punishment of his conspiracy a dangerous criminal, the mines of Peru would not prevail on me; I would spurn them from me with indignation. But what advantage, I again ask, can accrue to our good emperor by shutting up in the castle this poor body of a marquis? In some six months he must be released, as well as his daughter, for want of proof; that is, if either of them survived so long, which I should hardly expect; for despair such as theirs I never witnessed."

These last words recalled to the mind of Steinman the image of Thomasine drowned in tears. "You did wrong, Schelme," said he sharply, "you did very wrong to alarm that

delicate young girl so much. How was it possible for her to bear the idea of her father loaded with irons, and buried in the bottom of a dungeon?"

"Why, what would you have? it was absolutely necessary to intimidate them to get them to speak. But if I went too far, it is but a failing of the trade after all. Happily, however, it depends on you, sir, to repair my faults; and you may do so the more easily, that no inquisition has been begun; no interrogatory written down; —there is no document to be suppressed—no paper to be abstracted; all which is ever attended with trouble. In fact, there is nothing but the money to receive, and that in return for a service rendered to a respectable and unfortunate family: the deed is every way worthy of you."

Such language, which was not at all in ac-

cordance with the malicious disposition of Schelme, would under any other circumstances have awakened the suspicions of Steinman; but his mind was not sufficiently calm to make any such observations. His cupidity was too much excited at the prospect of appropriating a large sum of money without any risk, especially as he saw in the project submitted to him a means of satisfying every one concerned.

"In fact, I think, Schelme," said he, after a pause, "that such a way of arranging this business would please every body. But there is always a confounded deal of difficulty in entering on a proposition such as you hint at, although at bottom it be much more advantageous to the party, who is thus saved from a criminal process, than to him who reaps some little emolument in consequence. At all events, a man in my superior rank cannot

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Schelme presented himself to Steinman on his return from Blevio, he had all the appearance of a man who has satisfactorily acquitted himself of an important and difficult commission.

"I rather fear," said he on entering, "that I have not come up to your views; but you must even excuse me, since I have done all I could. You must know, also, that the old fellow is by no means so rich in disposable pro-

[illegible] as we were led to imagine. He gave me proofs of his promptitude in procuring his correspondent [illegible] had been ever so willing, [illegible] have acted to the sum that I have [illegible]. Here is first of all, a bill of exchange on the house of Coutts and Co., London, for two hundred pounds sterling; and, secondly, an order on the brothers Neri, at Milan, for twenty thousand francs. These are quite good, that is, I confess I should have preferred the gold; but I ascertained that, except the private purse of Miss Thomasine, which you would hardly have wished me to meddle with, he has not twenty napoleons left in the palace. Every thing is arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. They were quite content with my word of honour, which I gave them in your name; and tranquillity now reigns once more in the mansion of Vareze."

To the great astonishment of Schelme, Steinman displayed no symptoms of pleasure; and taking, with the air of a man who is thinking on something else, the two bills, he put them without reading them in his pocket-book, saying—"You have managed the whole matter very ably; but since you set out I have been reflecting on it, and I have come to a determination to carry back these documents to Rhevio to-morrow."

These words were pronounced in so decided a tone as to admit of no reply, and Schelme offered none.

"When shall we set out?"

"I shall go as soon as the business of the morning is over, and I shall travel alone; I shall speak to you when I come back."

Steinman added that at that moment he had to finish some letters that were pressing, and

These he pressed for so earnestly, that the old marquis, fearing if he refused compliance he might create in this man a powerful enemy, at length consented to give up what he had hoarded for many years, and for an extraordinary call.

Next day Steinman, as soon as he was at leisure, did not fail to return to Blevio. He found Thomasine in the apartment of her father; as he expected, she started with fear and surprise on seeing him enter.—"I thought," said she with a trembling voice, "that every thing was over. What new difficulty has started up? Oh, my God!——"

"None, miss," hastily interrupted Steinman; "you may rest in peace: what I came to communicate to your father is not alarming in its nature. Perhaps," he added with a smile, which he was anxious to render agreeable, "he may admit you to a share in our conversation;

but for the present I would wish to speak to him alone."

Thomasine hesitated; she had a disinclination to leaving her father with a man of a bad character, and one who had already caused him so much uneasiness, but at a signal from the marquis she consented to withdraw. Steinman accompanied her with a respectful air to the door of the apartment, which he closed after her. He then returned, and taking a seat by the desk of the old nobleman, began to open a large red-morocco pocket-book with a silver clasp, which appeared quite crammed with different papers. Suddenly halting in the midst of this operation, he exclaimed, drawing a small packet from his pocket—"I had forgot," said he, presenting it with the envelop to the marquis, "a preliminary that is indispensable. There, sir, are the bills of exchange, which were transmitted to

me on your part. If I refuse to accept of them, it is not, I assure you, that I disdain such a proof of your kindness, but because my rank and my birth forbid me to accept of money from any one but the emperor my master. You are aware, my dear marquis," he continued, with easy assurance, "that it is not allowable for noble persons like us to do a great many things that people of ordinary rank may practise without impropriety."

Astonishment kept the marquis from replying to this fine harangue. When he first saw Steinman come in, his apprehension was that the motive of so unexpected a visit was to dispute the bargain that had been concluded with Schulme, in the hope of extorting from him a larger sum, and he was puzzling himself how to escape this new vexation; but when, so far from asking him for more, he saw the Austrian

actually offering him back the bills he had already given away, he was utterly at a loss to guess at his ulterior intentions, and therefore he continued silent. Steinman, seeing the marquis hesitate about taking back the bills of exchange, laid them down on the bureau; and then opening his pocket-book with much solemnity, he drew from it a parchment diploma, from which were suspended a large seal of yellow wax and a smaller one of green; along with this he also produced a number of other decrees of the Aulic Council, loaded with stamps and with seals of all forms and of all sizes. "I thought it but proper," said he, on producing these documents, "that before I made known to you the important business on which I now wait on you, it was fitting, nay indispensable, that I should prove to you the nobility of house; a nobility which ascends to the time

of Joseph I., of illustrious memory. The original diploma which you hold in your hand, and which proves that fact, has been duly enrolled in the registers of the circle of Lower Saxony. I have brought also certificates of my birth attested in proper form, by which you will see that I descend in a direct line from Gottlieb Conrad de Steinman, who was created a knight by the said sovereign. It was not until I had submitted to you proofs of the equality in point of rank that exists between us, that I could be bold enough to declare, as I now do, that I dare aspire to the hand of Miss, your daughter."

This pretension to equality of rank, on the part of a being whom he looked on as so infinitely his inferior, appeared to the marquis so extremely ludicrous, that in spite of his customary circumspection, and his weakness of

health, he could not check an ironical smile, as he replied with studied gravity—"M. Steinman, or M. de Steinman I should rather say, I am happy that you and I are on a footing of equality. In the time of the Jacobins and of the Cispadan republic, I became the equal of a crowd of people; but I had thought that since the formation of the Holy Alliance the sovereigns of Europe had at last discovered their true interests, and had in consequence restored the distinction of ranks. I see, however, that I was mistaken, and that you are noble, and of a nobility that ascends to the seventeenth century. Will you be so kind as to instruct me on this point;—do people that were ennobled at that time pass in Germany as belonging to the ancient *noblesse?* I suppose, of course, that they do."

This dry answer, and the disdainful tone in

which it was put, so different from the tone of politeness usually adopted by the marquis, appeared a bad augury to Steinman of the success of his application. He answered coldly, that before the dissolution of the German empire, there was a very marked distinction between the princes and the counts immediate, who had votes individually or collectively in the electoral diet, and mere gentlemen; but that since the congress of Vienna there existed no longer any difference between the different ranks of the German nobles.

"Such a rule is, in point of fact, the most reasonable," continued the marquis, in the same tone of sarcasm, "in a country where all derive their origin from a common source; as for myself, I protest to you, M. Steinman, that did you belong to one of those families of the chapter who can prove their sixteen quarters,

or even to one of those powerful courts or kings that furnish for contingent to the army of the emperor one whole footman, or one half horseman, my respect for your birth would not be in any measure greater than it is at present."

Steinman, whose individual as well as national pride were equally shocked by the marquis's observations, replied with sharpness—"Know, sir, since you seem ignorant of the fact, that no part of Europe furnishes a nobility more ancient and more uncontaminated by improper alliances than does Germany; and as to our great and royal houses, where will you find elsewhere, unless perhaps in France, princes who have reigned with more glory and with less interruption for so many ages?"

"That is indisputable," replied the marquis, with a sneering air: "for instance, what an

important part did not the County of the castle of Hapsburg act in the world only six centuries ago, and the lord of the little town of Hohenzollern Sigmaringuen: these are, I believe, the heads of two of the greatest monarchies in Germany. Then you have the royal house of Saxony, which is traced up to Wittikind; as if, forsooth, any mighty honour were derivable to the descendants of a savage warrior subdued by Charlemagne!"

He would have proceeded, but Steinman could no longer repress his rage. "And what, pray, are you, after all," cried he, red with passion, "to speak with so much contempt of crowned heads?"

"What am I!" said the old man, raising himself up by the two arms of his chair, and his eye sparkling with anger; "what am I!—a descendant of the masters of the world—one

even to one of those powerful courts or kings that furnish for contingent to the army of the emperor one whole footman, or one half horseman, my respect for your birth would not be in any measure greater than it is at present."

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"That is [illegible] replied the marquis with [illegible] for inst[illegible]

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of the offspring of the sovereign people—a patrician, escaped from the hands of the barbarians, and the destruction of civilisation. Nor is my family the only one that goes back to that glorious stem; Venice shuts within her walls many such, whose famous names, hardly altered by the lapse of ages, serve to attest their noble source. The Pisones, the Cornelii of history, still survive in her Pisani and her Cornare; Piedmont has her ancient Balbi, as Lombardy has her Varèzi, the sons of the great and unfortunate Varus. But, alas! why recall our titles of honour, in the state of abasement to which our country has sunk? Oh, hapless Ausonia! what a lot is thine! A prey from sea to sea to the stranger, thou countest among thy sovereigns the German, the Gaul, the Allobrogian, but not one Roman among the whole!"

As he pronounced these words he raised his eyes to heaven, and his glance lighting on the yellow crops that crowned the summit of the hills beyond the lake, he mournfully exclaimed, in the language of his native bard,

"Barbarus has segetes?—eheu!"

and wholly overcome with the melancholy contemplation, deep sighs burst from his breast, and large tears chased each other down his furrowed cheek.

Steinman was confounded on observing such an exalted burst of patriotism in the old man, and gazed on him for some minutes in silence, and without attempting an answer. At length the marquis, having dried his eyes, assumed a more subdued tone; for he had had leisure to consider what he had just uttered, and was sensible that his emotion had hurried him too

far. "What I have said of the German nobility," he went on, "M. Steinman, is by no means said with a view to lower them in comparison with the nobility of other modern nations, none of whom can boast of an origin more respectable. In France, for instance, the nobility (I do not speak of those plebeians who have been ennobled in mass by a charter of which I shall say nothing), the ancient nobility, who are so vain of their descent, what are they but a chaotic mixture of the Celtæ, the Galli, and the Teutones; that is, of savages and of slaves? In Spain, is it not well known that the blood of the greater portion of the proud hidalgos has coursed in the impure veins of infidel Moors or despicable Jews? And in England! but what are their lords, but an assemblage of Picts, Normans, and Welch? On the throne of Great Britain, I

comfort; I see seated a noble and ancient race—the illustrious family of Brunswick, a younger branch of our house of Este. And you may perceive how highly the princes of England esteem their Italian origin, when the Queen of England has given to the palace in which she now resides, on the other side of the lake, the name of Villa d'Este. But, with this exception, what are the families of the sovereigns of the north? In Sweden, you have a plebeian general; and the autocrat of all the Russias, that powerful monarch, whose right hand touches the Vistula, and his left the great wall—whose armies are as brave and as disciplined as those of Alexander, and as numerous as those of Darius; what is he but the grandchild of one of the petty princes of Lower Germany?"

Steinman, seeing that the marquis had re-

sumed his habitual composure, now thought he might interrupt his harangue. "No one, marquis," said he, "is ignorant of the mighty conquests of the Romans, nor that Rome was the mistress of the world; but it would be but just to treat the nations of the north with somewhat less contempt, who vanquished the victors and subdued the conquerors." This was a home-thrust; and the marquis, instead of replying to it, was obliged to seek shelter in his erudition as in a strong hold. "Ah! sir," said he, "our misfortunes are known throughout the world; but if the barbarous hordes that violated the sacred territory of genius and of the arts have enriched themselves with our spoils, at least they ought not to boast of their success; we fell not but by our own fault. The overthrow of the Roman republic was owing to the discord of the citizens; and

the empire of the Cæsars was destroyed by the effeminacy arising out of an unbridled luxury. I can state my opinions on that melancholy subject with some confidence, for it has been the object of my constant meditations for thirty years past. I have proved to my own satisfaction, and I can show it to the conviction of any impartial man, that the evil arose principally from the changes that were introduced into the offensive armour of the Roman soldiers. The moment that it was seen fit to change the short sword, the formidable *gladius* for the long lance, borrowed from the Spaniards, all was lost.

"From that period our decadence is to be dated. It may in fact be easily supposed, that when the soldier must approach his enemy closely, in order to give effect to his blow, the slightest hesitation is dangerous, and the war-

rior even in his own defence must dart on his foe. Thence came the necessity, and thence the habit of boldness, that renders victory certain. Numerous examples prove this theory of mine; but the most curious assuredly is that which I have been fortunate enough to be the first to notice in a dissertation dedicated to the Royal Society of Antiquaries in London, who on that occasion did me the honour to admit me as a member of their learned body. I there established by measurement made of ancient monuments, that the cut-and-thrust sword —the terrible claymore of the brave Scotch highlanders, which rendered them invincible before they were acquainted with the gun or the bayonet, is precisely of the same length to a tittle as our *gladius*; the only difference, and that is a very trifling one, has respect to the breadth of the blade, which however was not by any means so

settled, as not to admit of variation. Yes, give us back the arms of the Scipios and of the Cæsars," said the old man, with a flourish of his hand, "and we shall be masters of the world still."

Whilst the marquis was thus dissertating on the immense advantages of the *gladius*, Steinman was thinking on Thomasine, and pondering in his head in what way he should bring back the conversation to the point whence it had set out, and from which it had now wandered so widely. With this view he thought it best to take advantage of an instant of pause, when the marquis, who had run himself out of breath, was obliged to stop, in order in his turn to take part in it. Being now perfectly aware of the extent of the old lord's pretensions, he was careful to say nothing that could possibly shock them, hoping by the submissiveness

of his future behaviour to regain the ground that he had lost.

"Sir," he proceeded, with an air of extreme deference, "your conjectures on the fall of the Roman empire and its causes appear to me to be in every respect as ingenious as they are plausible, and I entirely agree with you in opinion. I acknowledge also the great distance that separates in public consideration such illustrious families as yours, enriched by mighty historical recollections from those whom recent services have admitted to a participation in the honours of the state. The equality in the privileges of the two parties, of which I spoke, lies in nothing else. Even in our country, men distinguish between the great lord and the simple gentleman; and yet they are all distinguished by the generic name of nobles. We are in the

same situation as in the army, where the high dignity of commander-in-chief does not prevent us from giving to him who holds it, as we do to the lowest subaltern, the common title of soldier."

The marquis, by a sign of assent, signified that he was content to make this concession, and Steinman proceeded more boldly—

"It follows then, marquis, from this state of modern society, that there exists a species of confraternity among the several ranks of nobility; and that without neglecting the privileges of antiquity, advantages of a different kind are held to compensate for the want of it. It is on this principle that alliances are now-a-days formed. One man possesses fortune and an ancient origin, another has power and influence; one has judgment and experience, another youth and beauty."

It was impossible not to see the drift of this harangue; but the proposal of Steinman, under whatever form of insinuation presented, was not the less displeasing to the marquis. He was quite determined to refuse it; and yet, in the critical position in which he stood, he was obliged to have recourse to great management. He replied in consequence in general terms, but without anger, that it was not untrue that in modern times alliances had been contracted which would formerly have been deemed altogether unsuitable, and it was impossible to say where this levelling system might one day end. At length, when Steinman became more pressing, he was obliged to inform him that he had no intention of marrying his daughter at all, that she was yet very young, and had never contemplated any establishment; and he himself, moreover, being feeble and infirm, could not

dispense with those attentions which she paid to him with a tenderness which formed the only gratification of his life.

Steinman replied, that he had foreseen that objection, and that he would most willingly pledge himself beforehand never to occupy any other house, than that of the marquis, as his; and that the filial piety of Thomasine, which was a special recommendation in his sight, rendered him most anxious to share with her the fulfilment of a sacred task;—in a word, that it would be the endeavour of both to charm the weariness of his old age.

This previously-conned discourse was accompanied by every demonstration that was calculated to give it the appearance of sincerity; but neither the tone nor the demonstration produced the effect that Steinman seemed to expect. The marquis, after having thanked

him with somewhat constrained courtesy, willing to get rid as soon as possible of his importunate solicitations, stated that his resolution was irrevocable; and he thought he should be wanting in the respect that he felt to be due to him if he permitted him to indulge in any hopes which might interpose to prevent his forming an alliance with some one else, to whom his place and his personal advantages gave him a right to aspire.

So decided a refusal displeased Steinman to the highest degree, nor did he feel in any respect soothed by the obliging terms in which the marquis had couched it. Giving way to his habitual rudeness of character, which he always did when not restrained by his interest, he said, with an arrogant tone, that in the critical position in which the marquis stood in respect of the government, it was a most rash act

to refuse to listen to a means, as certain as it was honourable, of extricating himself from the predicament in which his imprudence had placed him, and that he must thank himself for any consequences of a disagreeable kind that might result from it. "As to myself, I have," said he, "but one course to follow—I will be either your son-in-law, or the most implacable of your enemies."

As he finished this speech, he rose abruptly and left the apartment, the door of which he slammed after him with a violence that made every room in the palace of Varèze echo again.

He had not reached the brink of the lake ere Thomasine had rejoined her father. She had waited with extreme impatience, or rather, she had watched for his setting out, less from a feeling of curiosity than from a wish to see

her father delivered from the presence of a man whose visits had caused him so great uneasiness. The moment the old man perceived her he held out his arms to embrace her—"Come, my child," said he, "and raise up the courage of your old father, who is sinking under the burden of persecution. Come, thou only support and consolation of my life!"

Thomasine tenderly returned the pressure, while the marquis continued—"Would you think it, my love, this police-officer, this German, has had the insolence to demand your hand! Yes, and affecting, forsooth, a feeling of delicacy, he gave me back those bills which his agent yesterday extorted; but it was only with a wish to ravish from me a good, which is a thousand times more precious."

At this alarming piece of intelligence Thomasine, seized with fear, remained mute and

trembling, a thousand different feelings confounding her—her recollections of La Cesia, the promise she had made to him—her love, her fears, by turns, shook her frame, and she could with difficulty sob out—"My father! my father! such a sacrifice is impossible!"

"And who, my child, requires it of you?" said the marquis, in a tone of indignation—"Could I—I, the last descendant of my noble race, give you over to an obscure, contemptible being such as he! How could you imagine such a thing?"

Poor Thomasine thought that now the favourable moment had arrived for making the confession, which for a long time had hung heavy on her breast; but the bashfulness inseparable from virgin innocence withheld her. While she was hesitating, the marquis went on—"Ah! rather than subscribe to such a

humiliation, I would lay down my life! and yet I cannot help shuddering when I think of the dreadful dungeons of Venice, with which those monsters dared to menace me. Nature revolts at the bare idea of such a punishment."

Whilst he pronounced these words, with deep and interrupted groanings, his alarmed daughter perceived that a cold sweat covered his brow and pallid cheeks; and at length sinking under the weight of his deadly apprehensions, he fell lifeless on the floor. The only concern of Thomasine when she saw her father in this state was to succour him, and she immediately despatched a messenger for the doctor to aid her in the task. When the marquis had recovered from his fainting fit, and when she beheld him somewhat calmed again, she withdrew to the oratory, and there prostrated at

the foot of the altar, and her mind wholly absorbed in her father's illness, and abandoning all consideration of her own sorrows, she prayed to Heaven for him alone.

CHAPTER IV.

STEINMAN, on his return to Como, found Schelme at his lodgings, waiting to give him an account of some pressing matters: as soon as these were discussed, he told his assistant, with a dispirited look, that his journey had not been a successful one. "There is one consolation," replied Schelme, "you pled your cause with a full pocket."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the bills to be sure."

"Alas!" said Steinman, with a sigh, "they are no longer mine."

"And what have you made of them?"

Steinman now related with some embarrassment, and seeking at the same time to justify himself, the whole that had passed. When he had finished his story, Schelme replied, with that bantering tone that inferiors commonly assume when superiors, whose talents they despise, stand in need of their help—

"Egad, you have made a pretty kettle of fish! I grant that a pretty woman, with the near prospect of fifty thousand francs of rent, might well tempt you; but your ambition has destroyed you.—You should have thought of the sound old country proverb—better a bird in the hand than two in the bush. I got you a large sum of good money, which you might have kept without the least risk; and here,

without consulting a single soul, you have given every farthing of it up again! What do you intend to do next?"

"I don't know; all I know is, that I am most outrageously angry at the pride of that old rascal—that I am mortified by his refusal; and more in love with his daughter than I am either angry or vexed. Ah! could I but obtain her hand, there is no sacrifice I would not make. I would give a year's salary and the half of her portion!"

"The half! that is a swinging sum; but you are merely speaking for speaking's sake. Would you, in actual earnest, give ten thousand francs down on the nail to any one that should bring about this match?"

"I should be most happy to do so."

"You promise, then," continued Schelme, with an air of solemnity, and looking him

fixedly in the face, "that you'll pay down ten thousand francs the very day of the marriage?"

"The very day of the marriage;—that would be somewhat of the soonest."

"Ah, you hesitate; then if you think the sum over-much there is no ill done."

"No, I don't think so; but say five thousand francs on the marriage-day, and other five within the year that follows."

"Granted.—And if you fail your word?"

"Let me be crushed—hanged—damned!"

"I don't ask quite so much as all that; your bill to my order will be enough for me."

"You shall have it, my dear Sebelme; and the terms shall be of your own dictating. But tell me, I beg of you, what means do you propose to employ? Not that I cannot entirely rely on your judgment."

[illegible] Good [illegible] and he trusted [illegible]

[illegible] very vague hopes [illegible] of proceeding. [illegible] however, [illegible] difficulty. [illegible] he reckoned. [illegible] which was [illegible] to overcome such [illegible] might obstruct his views. He did not attempt to hide from himself the extreme [illegible] that the marquis felt against the marriage, and the very slight impression that the love of such a man as Steinman had produced on Thomasine. But if the old man was proud, he had had proofs enough that he was easy to be intimidated; and hence he concluded that the dread of a severe imprisonment would not

fail to gain the day over his prejudices of birth. As to the consent of the young lady, he made extremely light of that.—"She is," said he to himself, "of an age when all girls are eager to be married: doubtless, if she had freedom to choose, she would take a sweetheart somewhat more youthful and captivating than Steinman; but there is nothing absolutely repulsive about the man, he will do very well for a husband. In fact," he went on soliloquising, "we might employ a little force without any risk, if it were called for. There is no fear of the family's having recourse to the justice of the sovereign, since, thanks to their imprudence, the police has them under its thumb. The pretext of the safety of the state will put down all complaints."

These reflections increased his confidence; and he resolved, without losing time, to accom-

plish an undertaking which was to be so very advantageous to him. This time, however, on his journey to Blevio, he thought best to take a couple of assistants along with him, two active and intelligent rascals, in order that while he was penetrating to the citadel they might reconnoitre the outworks of the place.

He had reached the quay with a view to bargain for a passage, when chance, which sometimes makes a sport of overturning empires, but which does not the less condescend to mingle in the affairs of petty individuals, thought meet that Doctor Scalpelli, the physician whose aid Thomasine had invoked, should be also at the quay ready to set out to visit his patient. Schelme, who happened to know him by sight, proposed that they should club for a boat, and his offer was accepted. Before, however, giving an account of the conversation

of these two worthy gentlemen, it is necessary that my readers should know who this personage, now first introduced to their notice, was.

Doctor Scalpelli was a little, middle-aged man; his appearance had nothing extraordinary in it; and the only remarkable feature in his face were two deep-set eyes, black, lively, and sparkling. His piercing glance announced both the habit and the power of keen observation. He had commenced his studies at Padua, and he had finished them at Pavia, under the celebrated Professor Scarpa. Anatomy, the fundamental basis of the curative science, had been the principal object to which he had applied himself; and as he was endowed with great sagacity and much manual address, he speedily rose above the whole of his fellow-students in the art of dissection. His researches had been chiefly directed to the

nerves, the spinal marrow, the pineal gland, and the brain, generally; and he had had the good fortune to add to the important discoveries of Gall, in respect of those organs where the seat of thought is for the most part supposed to be placed. But this early success, as well as an inaugural thesis on the solar plexus, which he had defended with great applause on receiving his degree as a doctor, had been attended with fatal consequences to his moral system. Persuading himself in his arrogance that nature had no secrets unapproachable by him, he boldly denied the existence of that which he did not see; and this system, the fruit of misdirected vanity, conducted him by the straight road to materialism. He was even so bold as to say, in his cynical way, which the licentiousness of the times too much allowed, that if there was any such a

thing as a soul, it could not have escaped his investigation; and he promised, if ever he happened to light upon it, he would not fail to inform his friends of the discovery.

This deplorable doctrine united with vicious inclinations, which the salutary restraints of religion could alone moderate, had made Scalpelli a man of the most corrupt morals, disposed at all times to sacrifice justice and honesty to the least of his interests. The only circumstance that checked his career was the dread of compromising his safety, and the desire to preserve his reputation untainted. He had succeeded pretty well in both those objects during the five years that he had passed at Milan after quitting the university. He was at that time attached to the *Spedale grande*; a superb establishment, which Lombardy owes to two holy bishops, whose beneficent piety

religion and humanity equally extol. In this splendid monument of their munificence, the number of the patients often amount to some thousands, especially at the season when the rice-fields exercise their malignant influence. So extensive a clinical school could not fail to favour the progress of the young doctor; but it modifies the character of those that attend it differently, or rather their natural dispositions do. Men who have received from Heaven a compassionate heart are here moved to increased pity by the aspect of so much suffering; their zeal is doubled, and their anxiety to relieve the unhappy patients rises to the highest summit to which the most honourable profession in society can pretend to inspire; but he, whose miserable inclinations have wrapped him up in petty selfishness, who beholds in the sick man nothing but an object on which to practice,

is hardened by the daily contemplation of his pains, and soon begins to consider with inhuman indifference the most horrible anguish and the most melancholy termination of the diseases he is called on to administer to. The medical science when so practised, or rather when so degraded, is nothing but a base and disgusting trade.

Scalpelli was one of those men without feeling and without honour, but he combined real and actual talent with the art of concealing his views under a deceitful exterior. He had even the art of gaining over by the semblance of commiseration the confidence of his wealthy patients, reserving the ruggedness of his merciless indifference for the poor, and for those from whom he had nothing to hope.

Such was the physician of the family of Varèze, with whom Schelme was now sailing

towards Blevio. We have said that this agent of the police was a skilful physiognomist. He imagined, and he was not deceived, that he saw in the expression of the little doctor the marks of a base and interested man, and he immediately concluded that he might possibly serve to forward his designs; he thought, however, that some circumspection would be necessary.

"The Marquis Varèze," said he, addressing Scalpelli, "is, as I am confidently informed, an old and wealthy valetudinary. The family of such a man must be a good job to you."

"Not so good as you might think: for, in the first place, though the father is ailing, the daughter is as fresh as a rose, and never has one hour's sickness; and then the fees, as you are aware, are very small in our country."

"I grant that; and what is infinitely worse,

the blockhead who kills you, or allows you to die when you might live, is paid as handsomely as the skilful physician who is learned in all the resources of his art."

"Ah, sir," replied the physician, with a smile of satisfaction, which proved that the bait had caught, "no man is infallible."

"But, by-the-bye, Doctor Scalpelli, are you at all aware that you may not keep the Marquis Varèze long?"

"Why, pray?"

"That," replied Schelme, with a mysterious look, "is a state secret; but as by your profession you ought to be a prudent man, I may state to you in confidence that the marquis has been so foolish as to connect himself with the enemies of the state, and that he runs a momentary risk of being dragged off to some castle or other; and if he were once there, God

only knows when he would come back again—or rather I may say, with so feeble health as his is, he would never return at all."

"Doubtless, if he were harshly treated; but, if they only left him his books and his papers, he would live wherever he was placed as comfortably as in his own house, which he very rarely quits."

This answer, which Schelme did not expect, obliged him to go back to the point whence he had set out, and to make a turn in order to get on again.

"However that may be," said he, "the marquis will unquestionably be arrested and put in prison; that is, if he do not accept of a proposal which would, I confess, extricate him completely from his embarrassment."

"In his place I should not hesitate; I would accept of any thing—any thing that keeps

a man from losing his liberty is advantageous."

"I think precisely as you do; but the old fool is wholly governed by the prejudices of his birth, forsooth."

"All noblemen are so."

"He refuses a most suitable marriage for his daughter with a man whose credit would save him from every risk."

"That is most unreasonable."

"Stop," said Schelme, after a minute of pretended reflection, "an idea has just come into my head:—why, doctor, I dare say you might arrange this matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. All you have to do is to make a strong representation to the marquis of his utter inability to support the fatigue of a long journey, and still less the rigour of a state-prison. I know him well, his character is

feeble, easy to be intimidated; fear will make him agree to any thing."

"That is all possible enough," replied Scalpelli; "but family affairs are what no one has any right to meddle with."

This negative response would have cut short farther treaty had it been pronounced with the decisive tone of an honest man; but Schelme was too knowing a fellow not to conclude, from the irresolute tone and air of the doctor, that his only reason for laying down this principle was to get a higher fee for the violation of it, to which he was quite willing to consent. He went on, therefore, to observe, "that the rule was doubtless a good one in ordinary cases; but that in the case which they were discussing, to insure tranquillity to the poor marquis for the remainder of his days, it mattered not by what means, would be the most valuable service that

could possibly be rendered to him. The whole of his family could not fail to be grateful for it. And so true is that which I now tell you," said he, lowering his voice and applying his mouth to the doctor's ear, "that the son-in-law who is to be, were the marriage to be effected by your interposition, would turn you out a hundred napoleons as a wedding present."

"I have no need of any such compliment to decide my conduct," replied the doctor in the same tone, "if it could be proved to me that I ought to follow such a line of conduct."

"Let us come to the point at once," said Schelme, interrupting him with a tap on the shoulder; "your doubts, doctor, have reference chiefly to the performance of the promise: in such affairs writings can hardly be exchanged, but we may give an earnest-penny;" and while he said this, he slipped into Scalpelli's hand

the bishops. The latter took them, and replied in a serious manner—

"Were my tenets in their nature as bad as you suppose them to be, you could have no ground for censuring me for them, at the same time that you act in your views. I do so only because they appear to me most lawful; for, were they not so, nothing would tempt me for a moment to entertain them."

"And I," replied Schelme, with a face of equal gravity, "in such a case, would be very far from making any such a proposal to you: I have too much esteem for your character."

Their falsehood was mutual; but it is no rare sight to see those who are utterly destitute of any sense of shame pretending that they are incapable of crimes to which, at the moment, their interest does not happen to tempt them.

When these two worthies had agreed on the terms of their bargain, they employed the remainder of the passage in concerting between them the means of conducting it to a successful issue. Arrived at Blevio, they separated; and Sobelmo took up his quarters at the inn, while Scalpelli went on to the Palace Varèze. He found, as he expected, the marquis rather uneasy than seriously ill. After feeling his pulse, which was somewhat hard, but which indicated no fever, he made a sign to Thomasine of evil omen, which alarmed her above measure. When they were alone together, he told her that there was no immediate danger; but repose, and above all things, an entire abstinence from all agitating thoughts was indispensable to ward off the severe malady, whose threatening seeds he very distinctly perceived. At the time, he contented himself with ordering a

soothing draught, and some of those innocent antispasmodics that operate more on the imagination than on the physical organs; and he added, that he would return at an early hour next morning, as he feared some fresh accession of fever during the night. Thomasine, in terror at this declaration, pressed him strongly to remain for the night at the palace; an arrangement to which he consented with some appearance of reluctance; repeating several times during the evening to the marquis and to his daughter the absolute necessity, in the condition in which the former was then situated, of avoiding every description of agitation, which might be attended with extreme danger and, by consequence, of guarding with the utmost care against every thing that had the slightest tendency to excite it. He well knew that such advice, which it depended only on themselves

to observe, would only redouble the extreme anxiety under which they were then suffering. Yet the end of the day came, and passed much more comfortably than the doctor had in his assumed fears given reason to suppose it would. And when the hour of bed-time came, having first examined the pulse of the sick man once more, he declared that he foresaw nothing troublesome in the case, and accordingly next morning he would set out at an early hour, and would not repeat his visits unless specially sent for.

CHAPTER V.

THOMASINE, somewhat comforted in respect of her father's health by the last words of the doctor, retired to her chamber to take some repose. She had need of it; for during two entire nights she had not laid down on her bed, and she had suffered extremely from agitation of mind as well as fatigue of body. Ever since the fatal visit of Steinman, she had not ceased to tremble for the liberty and even for the life of the author of her days.

So mournful anticipations in respect of her father had stifled whatever uneasiness she might have felt from other causes; but love, which had taken refuge in the bottom of her heart, had lost none of its energy; and the moment that sleep came to calm a portion of her griefs, the image of La Cesia presented itself to her eyes. He looked sorrowful, lowring, and angry: she advanced towards him, and sought to appease his irritation; when suddenly the same dream that had on a former occasion alarmed her was reproduced before her eyes. Again the agents of police attempted to seize him; but on this occasion the individual with whom La Cesia struggled was the odious Steinman. Her agony was at its height, when she was awoke by a loud and repeated knocking at the door of the palace, which made the whole mansion shake again. At this noise she

arose, and running to the window, beheld below a group of men, some of whom were armed; and at the brink of the lake she discerned, by the gleaming of their torches, a close shallop, covered with black cloth in the same way as the Venetian gondolas are. In a short time she heard the voice of Schelme, who, in a tone of authority, commanded the door to be opened in the name of his majesty the emperor. She immediately arose, hastily huddled on her garments, and proceeded to her father's apartment, whither she was soon followed by the officer; who, on his entering the room, stated that he was charged to arrest the Marquis Varèze, and to carry him off immediately.

"Whither do you purpose to conduct him?" exclaimed Thomasine.

"I know nothing of that; the order that I

bear calls on me to see him conveyed on board a covered shallop, which is to carry him to Lecco, the boundary of the district; from Lecco he will probably be conveyed to Venice, to the prison where the other conspirators are at present confined."

"Sir," said the marquis with a trembling voice, "it is impossible to undertake so long a voyage without some preparation. You must at least allow me time to take some changes of linen, some clothes, and to arrange my papers."

"You have had reason to expect this visit for a long time past; if you are not prepared, assuredly you might have been. We must be quick. If you are in any difficulty, my fellows are expeditious rascals—they'll bundle off both you and your baggage in the turn of a hand."

Thomasine on hearing this burst into tears; and her father, thunderstruck by so fatal a blow,

[illegible] would be coolest forward as possible indeed, [illegible] instant was incapable of uttering a single word. At that moment the doctor entered the apartment: he had been roused by the clatter and had been in such haste to come down stairs that he had forgot even to remove his night-cap.

"What means all this?" said he, looking to the marquis. "Ah, sir, what has happened! what a difference I find in your present state from that in which I left you!" Schelme then shortly explained the subject of his visit; which heard, Scalpelli replied in a firm and decisive tone—"I must inform you, sir, that the Marquis Vareze shall not quit the house, at least at this moment: I am certain he could not reach Venice alive."

"Ha! who the devil are you," retorted Schelme with a loud and angry voice, "that

thus dare to oppose the formal orders of the sovereign?"

.. "Sir, I am a doctor of the University of Pavia, a practitioner of medicine in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, by virtue of the imperial license. I am quite aware of the duties imposed upon me as a faithful subject, and never shall I encourage any one to offer resistance to lawful authority; but neither shall I fail in the duty I owe to my profession, and therefore I here declare that you must hold yourself responsible for the consequences of your present proceedings: the life of the marquis will be endangered if he be taken from home in the state of extreme weakness in which he now is."

"Mr. Doctor," replied Schelme, "we might attend to your representations were this a case of private wrong or of ordinary criminality, but

you must be aware that in state-matters no consideration can suspend the execution of an order emanating from the supreme authority." So saying, he took out his watch, and addressing Thomasine, "Miss," said he, "I shall allow you half an hour to make ready for this journey, and to bid farewell to your father."

The word "farewell" roused Thomasine from the state of stupor into which she had sunk, and advancing towards Schelme, she exclaimed, in an almost menacing tone—"What! bid farewell to my father! how dare you propose such a thing? No, 'tis not imprisonment that shall cause me to do so; I will follow him whithersoever he goes, and death alone shall tear me from him."

Schelme replied to this, that none but the marquis was included in the order, and he could allow no one whatever to go along with

him; and at any rate the boat was too small: there was room only for the prisoner, the boatmen, and the two guards who had it in charge not to lose sight of him.

"Well, then," cried Thomasine, in accents of despair, and driven to distraction by this announcement, "I will wade after him until the waves swallow me up!"

While she threw herself into the arms of the fainting old man, the doctor thought it a proper opportunity of again interposing. "You see, sir," said he to Schelme, "what a dreadful effect the mere announcement of this order has already produced on the two objects of it; what then may not be feared from an attempt to put it into execution? I insist on your allowing them time to recover themselves."

"That is what I will not do. Write a pre-

scription for your patient, doctor, we shall take it along with us."

"That then is all you'll do?" answered Scalpelli, raising his voice. "Well, sir, since it must be so, I here declare to you, that I shall set out this moment for Milan—that I shall proclaim your conduct to our just and humane viceroy there, to whom I am personally known. You will then, perhaps, discover the inutility of your present argument—that the security of the state is to be consulted before any thing else; and that that which is to be consulted before even the security of the state, is the dictates of humanity. To suppose the contrary, would be to libel the well-known views of our king and of his august representative. You are well aware, sir, that the meanest subject has ready access to those princes; and I shall not fail to acquaint his imperial highness that you have refused to

comply with the formal requisition of a regularly licensed physician; and doubt not, my friend, that the least you will get for your pains will be a reprimand instead of thanks; and should any thing happen to the marquis on his journey, punishment or deprivation of office is the least you may look for."

These words, pronounced with a degree of heat that bordered on indignation, appeared to produce some impression on the officer; he hesitated, and at length consented to suspend the execution of the order until the arrival of Steinman, who, he said, would be there in a few hours in order to affix his seal to the marquis's papers. In the interim he withdrew, leaving the marquis, without witnesses, at full liberty to confer with the doctor and with his afflicted daughter.

The boldness and decision displayed by Scal-

pelli on behalf of her father, had inspired Thomasine with the liveliest sense of esteem and gratitude; and the marquis on his side looking on him as his most zealous friend, and placing all his hopes in him, proceeded immediately to relate to him all that had taken place from the fatal day on which the two agents of police had so unexpectedly arrived at Blatio. He told him how Schelme had made a sort of pecuniary arrangement of the matter with him; which compromise Steinman had only renounced for the purpose of substituting a proposal of marriage with his daughter; a proposal which was altogether inadmissible. The doctor interrupted the old man here to ask if he had thought of any other means of extricating himself. "Alas! I know of none," said the old man with a deep groan, "at least, unless these wretches should consent to renew

the negotiation they have broken off, to accept the mercy again, and leave me at peace."

"That is what we must endeavour to bring them to, Doctor Scalpelli," said Thomasine eagerly; "and the interest that you have expressed for us satisfies me that you will employ in this negotiation all the resources of your excellent understanding. You are master of the conditions, let nothing stop you; promise all I possess, the entire property I inherit from my mother:—what, alas! would I not part with to save my father?"

"I am much afraid," said Scalpelli, shaking his head, "that as matters are now situated an arrangement is out of the question; even though these gentlemen were willing to go into it, they have no longer power to do so. The government is informed of the matter, and the revocation of the order does not depend on them."

However, it is but a trial; your present position is so bad, that no trial can well make it worse."

At this moment word was brought that Steinman had arrived, and Scalpelli instantly quitted the room in order to wait upon him. He found him with Schelme, who, as soon as he saw him, burst into a fit of laughter; and seizing the doctor's hand, and presenting him to the inspector-general—"Here," said he, "is the best actor in the whole country. Egad, you almost made me afraid, so very naturally did you express your intention of denouncing me to the viceroy."

"I was exceedingly well disposed to do so, and I am so still," replied Scalpelli in a severe tone, withdrawing his hand from the grasp of the officer. "I could not behold, without being much affected, the spectacle of this wor-

thy family in such deep distress; and I was shocked at the harshness with which you, sir, thought proper to treat two persons whom from my soul I cannot believe to be very guilty."

"Ha!" cried Schelme, withdrawing a couple of paces in surprise, and casting on the speaker a wild look, "what! have you forgot our agreement? Where," he pursued, in an accent of marked astonishment, "is the bargain we concluded yesterday, Master Doctor?"

"I have not forgotten what passed yesterday," said the other in reply; "but such bargains are not irrevocable."

"And the five napoleons?"

"Are here," said Scalpelli, pulling them from his pocket, and, seeing that Schelme hesitated to take them back, he tossed them with contempt on the table. Then turning to Steinman, who was struck dumb with wonder at this

procedure—" Sir," he continued, in a cold tone, " when this agent of yours spoke to me on this affair, and begged me to second his projects, I consented, on the supposition that the resistance of the father to the proposed alliance arose solely out of his prejudiced notions about birth and rank, all which I look on as extremely unreasonable; but it has now come to my knowledge that the young lady has no less aversion than her father has to such a match, and I myself in consequence am equally opposed to compelling one of the wealthiest heiresses of our country to become your wife contrary to her own inclinations."

Steinman was disconcerted by this declaration, nor did he know upon what principles to explain so unexpected a change of opinion. He replied, with an embarrassed air, that his

views were strictly honourable; that he had no other intention than to render the daughter of the marquis as happy as he possibly could by his union with her; and that, therefore, he could not see why one who really took an interest in the family should interfere to obstruct his wishes.

"I hope, at least, doctor," added the inspector-general, in an almost deprecatory tone, "that, having promised to lend me your aid and advice, you will not go so far as to attempt to do me any dis-service."

During this colloquy Schelme had closely and keenly watched the expression of Scalpelli's countenance with his lynx eyes, and he had been specially struck with the emphatic manner in which he uttered the words *rich* heiress. This was an immediate clue to him; and certain

that he had penetrated the real intentions of the interested practitioner—

"I am astonished, doctor," said he, "that a man of your wit and talent should pay attention to such petty griefs as those we have witnessed. How can you possibly seek to attach more importance to the caprice and coquetry of a young woman, than you do to the prejudices of an old man? What you should look to as a man of sense, is the certainty of fingering a reward proportioned to the service, which the peculiar circumstances in which you and he are placed, give you the power of performing for M. Steinman. His intention, as I told you in his name, was to make you a present of a couple of thousand francs; but, upon reflection, he has considered that that sum was not in fair proportion to the fortune of his in-

tended bride; and he was just telling me, at the moment you came in, that he had made up his mind to come down with four thousand."

"I would not accept of ten thousand," replied the doctor, looking alternately to Steinman and to Schelme, in order to see what would be the effect on the pair of so considerable a demand.

Steinman bit his lips, a slight degree of redness passed over his cheeks, and he was about to exclaim against it, when Schelme made him a sign to repress his anger, and hastily replied—"What! ten thousand francs! egad, that is a swinging sum; and especially if you consider this, the fortune is not money down on the nail; we must wait a long time perhaps before the old father slip away."

"Why so long?" answered the doctor; "he

is an old man; and besides—:" he said no more; but his ominous eye spoke the dark and atrocious purpose that then flitted before his depraved thoughts: then, fearing to go too far, he continued to address the pair—"Before," said he, "entering on any arrangement, we must first of all ascertain the mode of payment that is proposed. Are the funds ready? Is the sum in cash?"

"That," replied Steinman, sharply, "is not to be supposed."

"And why not?" replied Scalpelli, with an ironical sneer; "surely you draw enough of the ready from us!"

"The government leaves, notwithstanding, a very small portion in the hands of its agents; but I shall not refuse any kind of security that you may require."

"Well, then, you shall grant me a bill for ten thousand francs, payable six months hence, for money lent to you."

"But what if the marriage don't take place?"

"It shall take place if I say it shall."

This answer, pronounced in the tone of a man who is certain of what he promises, decided Steinman; he seized a pen, wrote out the bill, and delivered it to Scalpelli. The latter, after receiving it, pointed out to Schelme the five napoleons that were still lying on the table, and gave him a sign to pick them up; adding, in a muttering tone, as he left the room, "I did not think there was as much brains in an Austrian scull."

He immediately returned to Thomasine, who awaited his approach with extreme anxiety. His countenance announced nothing favour-

able. "Are we lost, indeed?" said she to him; "must we undertake that dreadful journey from which my father will never return?"

"Steinman, I find, has still the power of preventing it; the order for the arrest does not proceed from Milan, as I imagined: he has merely filled one of those blank orders that are committed to the custody of the superior officers of police. But the price that he puts on the arrangement renders it impossible."

"What! won't my fortune satisfy him? What would he have besides?"

"Your hand."

"Great God! and is it come to this?" exclaimed she, bursting into tears.

"I offered him money, but he refused it; and not without a show of reason. He could not accept of any thing without the risk of being compromised."

"You must tell him—that—my father—has an invincible repugnance to any such a proposal."

"He is aware of that; but he insisted, nevertheless, that the marquis would consent if you would: and he added, 'if she truly love her father, she will consent to this sacrifice, since it is only by it she can insure his repose, or even save his life.'"

"Cruel man," replied Thomasine, sobbing; "if I love my father! yes, I do love my father, and I will prove it to him. Go back, sir; tell him I consent to be——." She could not finish the sentence. At length, collecting all her strength, she added—"May the curse of Heaven alight and rest on his head if he deceive me, and if he yet persist in persecuting my father!"

"Fear it not, he will not act against his own

interest. Your marriage will guarantee for ever the tranquillity of the whole family."

"Well, it is all over.—Go, sir; and I—I shall proceed to render back to my father the life I received from him!"

It was impossible that this sublime effort of filial piety should not produce some impression on the physician; he was moved. Vice blunts, but does not absolutely destroy sensibility: for a moment he even grieved at the guilty part he was acting; but the vile craving cupidity, his predominant passion, checked in its first commencement his nascent remorse; and striving to stifle it effectually, he exclaimed to himself—"After all, why should I be so much grieved for a fate that is so common? If she marry this thick-pated German, she can e'en console her *ennui* by taking to herself a lover as other dames are wont to do."

So he spoke, but he was not convinced by his own sophistry; for there was a celestial purity in the character of Themasine that forbade the vile supposition.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Thomasine returned to her father, she found him in a most deplorable condition, equally languishing in spirit and enfeebled in body. "Be of courage, my dear father," said she affectionately, and endeavouring to call up a smile, "we shall not quit the palace."

As she spoke, a ray of joy lit up the almost closed eyes of the old man. "Then," said he, "they have consented to a new bargain? It will be a hard one, no doubt."

"A hard one, indeed," cried Thomasine, with a deep and prolonged sigh.

"But then, my dear, nothing is dearer than life; and truly mine was at stake here."

"I thought so; and I have purchased it accordingly."

"You did well, my child; but tell me, what do you propose to give to that avaricious man?"

Thomasine, for some time, could not find words to reply to her father's heart-rending question; at length, with an effort at calmness, she said—"Father, I have given in exchange for yours the life that you first bestowed on me."

"Explain your meaning," replied the marquis eagerly, who began to see into the dreadful truth: "what have you done? my fortune I can give up; I can strip me of my posses-

[illegible] my daughter my blood the blood [illegible] —Break will break the adieus [illegible] and let me part in peace. I will part." As he uttered these words he attempted to rise from the chair but he sunk back, as if exhausted with the violent workings of indignation and grief.

"Nay, now forget," said Tancred, pressing [illegible] the trembling hand of the old man with both [illegible] in a state to execute that purpose to which your strength is not equal to your courage. I must now assume that purpose myself since all trials is gone by."

"My guest—my dear daughter," said the [illegible] to tears, "do you imagine I can consent to [illegible] my sorrowful existence at the expense of thy happiness and thy life?"

"Nay, be not over miserable in the performance

of their duty; and besides, if I do experience sorrow, the thought that you are spared the pangs that I feel shall be my consolation. Believe me, my dear father, far from ever regretting the sacrifice on which I have determined, I should most willingly undergo, to secure you comfort, as much every day of my life. I may have indulged wishes of a different kind—I may have conceived hopes that are now most vain—but," she added, wiping away her tears, and looking up to heaven, "if I stand in need of aid to confirm my strength, I know where to seek for it—where it was never sought in vain!"

"And the benediction of thy father," exclaimed the marquis, folding her in his arms, "will render Heaven propitious to thy prayer. But I cannot even contemplate so horrible an idea; I cannot consent to forego my hopes.

[illegible] [illegible] more. Sempronia has both [illegible] and firmness of purpose; but these [illegible] [illegible] delicate [illegible] [illegible] is necessary as either. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] impressed with sufficient [illegible] [illegible] the one, the other repugnance [illegible] [illegible] to the odious marriage [illegible] [illegible]. It is for a person of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that will be sufficient [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] entreaties. But what if he be utterly destitute of [illegible] [illegible]? To assure myself.

[illegible] [illegible] I have a means that promises [illegible] success. The five hundred Vene- [illegible] [illegible] I myself buried in the cellar [illegible] [illegible] movement of the revolution are [illegible] [illegible]. I will give them up to him. Is not [illegible] [illegible] bribe? I will sell my medals; [illegible] [illegible] collection. It is the fruit of

twenty years' toil and research, and contains some most precious specimens, many of them unique; but I care not, I shall part with them for any price that may be offered. Let me have ready money, I am content; and when I am fortified with that powerful, that irresistible argument, I shall treat with Steinman. In fact, at bottom, I think he is right. Orders, bills of exchange, might not be paid; or they might ultimately give rise to inquiries, to discoveries, perhaps, of a very troublesome character, whereas money leaves no traces behind it; never does it compromise or betray its possessor. A negotiation founded on such a basis may perhaps succeed, and I shall at any rate attempt it immediately."

"Doubtless we risk nothing by that," replied Thomasine; "but recollect the wise counsel of your physician, he dreads every thing that may

occasion violent emotion; let me act in your stead; and it is besides better that I should in my own person frankly and sincerely, though as gently as I can, confess to him the absolute aversion I entertain for him."

"Follow the dictates of your heart, my child, I place my destiny in your hands."

He could not assuredly have acted more prudently; but Thomasine, on quitting him, found herself too much agitated to see Steinman that night. She was compelled to put off the interview until next day, and she charged Scalpelli to inform Steinman of her intention. In the mean time, she sought earnestly to compose her mind to calmness, when a sudden thought infused into her bosom a new source of trouble. She had adopted, without hesitating, the generous resolution of saving her father at the sacrifice of her dearest

hopes, although she felt at the moment, and that most deeply and feelingly, the extent of the price that her filial affection prompted her to pay. But now a conscientious scruple came to disturb her resolves, and to increase the grief that they had caused her. How far, she asked herself, was she bound by the solemn promise that she had given to La Cesia? Were the circumstances of her present condition so imperious, as to justify her in breaking through, by a single act of her will, an engagement so sacred, without the consent of the party to whom it had been made? This was a question of delicate resolution, on which she was afraid to venture; for she was aware of the difficulty of deciding in a case where her heart was so deeply interested. In this perplexity, the sentiments that ruled in her heart determined her to have recourse to the counsels of religion, and to seek

the advice of the vicar of Torno, a venerable ecclesiastic, who had enjoyed the confidence of her mother, and had been present when she breathed her last. This was, she thought, as far as it was now in her power replacing that maternal care of which she was now unhappily deprived. Without losing time, she made the boat be got ready, and directed her course to the mansion of the clergyman, built on a little arm of the lake close to the bank, and by the side of the church of which he was the head. Vespers were scarcely finished; and the vicar, instead of returning to his room, had climbed up to the tower, which served as a belfry. Travellerswh o visit Lombardy never fail to be struck with the singular elegance of structures of that kind in Upper Lombardy. They are commonly lofty square towers, of the finest proportions: the architecture is modern; the

ornaments simple, and in excellent taste. Near the top of them, a double arcade that runs round the tower affords a passage for the sound of the bell, which sometimes project from the surface; the summit is not terminated by the gothic peak that we have borrowed from snowy countries, but it is surmounted by a platform, which is a certain indication of a temperate clime. At Torno, in addition to this, there has been constructed on the level top a handsome octagon pavilion, which might serve as a model for a Belvidere to a summer residence. From this height may be seen, in its whole length, the western branch of the lake; and the view is only bounded by the high Alps, whose snowy summits tower above the chain of verdurous hills that border the lake. In the north-west, through a cleft that seems expressly made for that purpose, in the screen of the

lower mountains, appear the nearer and more picturesque group of hills of the canton of Tesino. The foreground of the landscape is as smiling and soft as the distant view is grand and imposing.

For thirty years had this delightful prospect charmed the eyes of the good old pastor of Torno; and yet every day that he gazed upon it opened to him some fresh charm — some previously undiscovered beauty. To minds at peace with themselves, custom gives an inexpressible sweetness even to pleasures that are of daily recurrence. It was in order the better to enjoy the lovely view that, after even prayer, whenever the horizon was pure and serene, he was wont to climb to the top of the tower; where the admiration inspired by so lovely an assemblage of his works, naturally led the mind of the pious man to the contemplation of the

great Author. He had formed the pavilion into a sort of sacred observatory. Above, a sort of rustic desk was placed, a crucifix of ebony, between two pictures representing religious subjects—these decorated the white-washed wall; and on a table in front of the principal window lay his bible, and his breviary placed at the foot of a telescope, which was sufficiently powerful to enable him to discern the fishermen in their boats as they approached the land; and he even pretended that he could, when the weather was perfectly serene, distinguish the dial-hand of the clock of Como cathedral.

The venerable old man took a tender interest in the daughter of the Marchioness Varèze; and beholding her pale and sunken, he asked her affectionately what was the matter with her, and why her roses had lost their hue.

Father," replied Thomasine with a sigh, "many and great griefs, and evils yet greater in prospect than these I now suffer, have destroyed the peace of my soul. I am come to implore your advice, and to commend myself to your prayers."

She then proceeded to tell him with all the candour of innocence, but with the hesitation inseparable from such a communication, in what manner she had pledged her faith.

When her story was done the vicar, who had listened with deep attention, replied—"My child, when honour makes a promise, it gives a gift indeed, but honour cannot part with what does not appertain to it. At your age, the disposal of your hand is not in your own power: law, reason, and of consequence religion, permit it not. Your promise, therefore, is null and void; but as it would be

most unjust that the person who contracted that unlawful enjoyment along with you should believe himself bound by it, when you are not so, it is your duty to announce to him that you have discovered your error."

"I will do so," replied poor Thomasine, groaning in spirit, "since it is my duty; but how will he support so terrible an infliction? And how can I think to survive it?"

"Doubtless, if you ask for power to enable you to do so from Him who never refuses the prayer of the fervent and the sincere, you will receive it. And think, besides, my child, think of the magnificent promises that are held out to those who suffer! For a few days of sorrow they are promised an eternity of joy! Ah!" said he, elevating at the same time his eyes to the sky, which at the moment was lighted up with the rays of a lovely sunset, "I think I

[illegible] behind yon cloudy curtains of purple and of gold, that holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, shining with light and glory unutterable, lasting without end and without measure, even the [illegible] awaits the just."

In pronouncing these words, the old man [illegible] as if entranced in ecstasy: tears of [illegible] moistened his eyelids, and his look [illegible] the gleam of the joys that his holy [illegible] to anticipate. Thomasine partook of his feelings, and sinking on her knees by his side—"Pray for me, father," said she, "pray for me, and I shall be heard!"

"Yes," replied he with unaffected simplicity, "I will pray for you and with you, my child: I have ample room to pray for you: for my prayer, so far as I am concerned, is but an offering up of thanks. I am an old man, it is true: but what have I to ask of my God? un-

less that he may continue to me the use of my eyes to gaze on the wonders of the creation, and keep within me a heart capable of loving the Creator."

Thomasine received the benediction of the vicar, and retired more calm, or at least less oppressed than she came. Nothing was indeed changed in her condition; but the serenity that is inspired by religion is contagious, and pious and tender minds experience its communicated influences. To such communications it would seem that Heaven has accorded a consoling virtue which softens grief and blunts sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

THE moment at length arrived that was to fix the fate of Thomasine. The interview that she had solicited with Steinman took place in the presence of Scalpelli; and such is the ascendancy of virtue, that her countenance remained firm and calm during the whole of its continuance, while the utmost embarrassment was discoverable in that of her oppressor. In vain did he seek confidence by his attempt to put on an air of tenderness and passion; the

constraint that it imposed on him only rendered his natural awkwardness the more conspicuous. At length he broke silence, and addressing the noble girl—"May I hope then, miss," he began, "that you will really deign to fulfil my ardent wishes?"

"My fate," replied she, with a sigh, "is in your hands; I have no longer any hope but in your generosity."

"Ah! madam, ask, or command rather, what you will, you will find me ever ready to anticipate your meanest wishes. I solemnly pledge myself to this before the doctor here, our mutual friend."

"He knows, and he must have told you, that I consent to this union with extreme repugnance; my feelings in that respect are deeply seated, and can *never* change," she added, laying a strong emphasis on never; "my sense

of duty alone, and the necessity of snatching my father from an imprisonment that cannot but cause his death, have determined me to this sacrifice. It is to me very painful to declare this to you, but the sincerity of my character compels me to be so plain."

Steinman blushed with vexation; that a declaration so positive should be made in the presence of a third party rendered it the more mortifying. "Madam," he at length replied, "I do not flatter myself that I shall, at the very first, be capable of inspiring you with the same affection that I myself feel, but I hope to possess your esteem in proving that I am not unworthy of your love; and time and custom may at length lead to softer sentiments."

"It is in your power, and in yours alone," interrupted Thomasine, eagerly, "to make me this moment the happiest of beings. Take as

a gift, a farewell offering, every farthing of my fortune; cheerfully, irrevocably shall it be given, and with it my sincere, my eternal gratitude."

"What you propose is impossible, even though I were willing to consent to it; but were I already master of that fortune, which with so much generosity you offer me, I protest to you I would renounce the half of it sooner than give up the possession of its mistress."

"What happiness is to be anticipated," exclaimed Thomasine, giving way to an emotion of indignation at this speech, "from the possession of a person who—"—she checked herself, unwilling so much to irritate the man before her; and added, after a momentary pause—"who cannot share it with you?"

Nothing less than the most sublime feeling of virtue could have enabled her thus to

restrain her expressions within the limits of moderation; though she had reason to dread lest the anger of a man equally destitute of principle and delicacy should be roused by her declaration to break off every species of arrangement, and to persecute anew the father she adored; and that fear also led her to soften her expressions so as not to render them so repulsive as they otherwise might have been. "Be assured, sir," she continued, "that I shall not deem the life of my father purchased at too high a price, whatever the price may be. You will meet from me neither complaints nor lamentations; and these involuntary tears," dashing from her eyes the drops that despair notwithstanding her courage had collected there, "shall be the last that you shall ever behold me shed."

"Fear nothing," replied Steinman, with a

look which he was anxious to make appear loving, but which was mingled with a sort of German stiffness which rendered him even more hateful than before; "you deserve to be happy, and with me you shall be so."

Hitherto Scalpelli had been a silent witness of this scene; but his heart smote him for favouring from vile considerations of interest a union which the mere consideration of moral causes yet more than conventional propriety rendered so utterly unsuitable for both parties. He was at length moved to pity the poor victim before him; and addressing Steinman—"Sir," said he, "you have declared your wish to please the lady. I am fully assured that at this moment nothing will more contribute to her pleasure than to put an end to this painful and now purposeless interview, and to allow her to return to her father."

[illegible] yielded to this recommendation with a readiness for which he sought to take credit in the eyes of his mistress; and Thomasso immediately withdrew, in order to inform her father of the bad success of her endeavours; adding, at the same time, that she was perfectly resigned to her fate. The old man attempted in vain to combat her resolution irrevocably determined on her line of conduct; she employed as much earnestness to obtain his consent as if her happiness had depended upon it; she even went so far as to declare that she would never espouse another. The old man had not power to resist a love so strong and so devoted: he called Scalpelli, and gave to his charge the arrangements of the marriage. He stipulated at the same time for the insertion of a clause in the contract that it should be provided that [illegible]

male issue of the marriage he should bear the name and arms of the house of Varèze, with the addition of a broken —— at the top of the shield."

Steinman consented to every thing that was required of him; and such is the power of prejudice, that we are not sure the old marquis, all overwhelmed with sorrow as he was, did not experience a degree of real enjoyment from a silly provision dependent on remote contingency, and equally useless and ridiculous, had it been as certain as it was precarious.

Thomasine made no demands—no exactions: all she asked was, that in every thing connected with the ceremony the most absolute simplicity should be studied.

When the fatal day arrived people wondered to see her: instead of proceeding with bent

down eyes, and that bashfulness of demeanour which had so distinguished her among her companions, she walked with her eyes raised to heaven, as if there she sought to read the character of her future destiny. Sad, but not cast down. Her step resembled in its firmness the description given by historians of the tread of the pure virgins of the primitive church when proceeding to receive the crown of martyrdom: their hearts upheld and sustained in meekness and devotedness by the singleness of their conscience and the sincerity of their belief. It was not to the cross that Thomasine was advancing, it was to the hymeneal altar; yet, had the alternative been submitted to her, much would she have preferred a death sudden and severe to the long and painful hopelessness that awaited her, in a union at which her heart revolted. When called on to make

the fatal response—"Yes," she uttered it with a loud voice, but so altered was its quality from that of her ordinary tone, that it was unintelligible. She spoke no more from that moment; but maintained a melancholy silence, so absolute and so long continued, that fears were entertained lest her reason should yield to her sufferings. In reconducting his bride from the chapel, Steinman perceived with alarm that her hand was cold and rigid; he gazed on her face, and beheld her lips pale and tremulous, and her eyes half shut and without expression; so striking and inconceivable was the change that a few minutes had operated, that instead of a blooming wife, in the flower of her youth and beauty, it appeared as if he had united himself to an animated corpse.

It was impossible that the health of Thoma-

[illegible] the way under a series of [illegible] their nature. The very [illegible] she was seized with a [illegible] and for some time her life [illegible]. The strength of her [illegible] her youth, [illegible] of Sicily who attended [illegible] over the violence [illegible] she was gradually regaining [illegible] resolved an order [illegible] the government [illegible] some difficult [illegible]

[illegible] the capital of [illegible] was put [illegible]

From Madame de Steinman to her Husband.

Blevio, Saturday.

My fate is henceforth determined. Heaven has refused to listen to my wishes; I prayed earnestly to be taken thither, and it drives me down to my native earth, and binds me to it by a chain which I feel compelled to respect. I am a mother. You know whether I have fulfilled the duties of a daughter. I have never attempted to conceal from you what that fulfilment has cost me; I will observe with the same scrupulosity those that maternity imposes upon me. But my health is sorely shaken, and I feel I shall not have power to act as I wish, and as I ought, unless I can obtain that quiet and repose which you alone have it in your power to bestow on me. The involuntary shuddering

that never fails to seize on me when I look on you, might be fatal to me in my present delicate state. I ask you not to spare me such painful feelings for my own sake, but from a regard to the infant whose existence assures to you the ultimate possession of my property. When, therefore, you return to Como, if you deem it necessary to visit Blevio, at least do not call on me to appear in your presence; if you insist on my doing so, and any misfortune be the consequence, the responsibility be on your own head.

THOMASINE DE STEINMAN.

CHAPTER VIII.

At the end of our first volume we left La Cesia full of love and high in hope, soon to be most cruelly and miserably disappointed. Whilst traversing the Lake of Como, his inventive mind was busied to discover some means of getting a reversal of the proscription which prevented him from taking advantage of the kind dispositions of Thomasine. The difficulties he foresaw were not small, and the prospect of them far from encouraging; but

what affected him most painfully, was the necessity of offering himself as a petitioner to the arbiters of his fate. He felt himself degraded in anticipation, by a step so repugnant to the fiery pride of his character, and to the line of political conduct that he had hitherto pursued.

"Yes," said he to himself, "if chance had made me a native of a state ruled over by such a monarch as the Emperor Alexander, I could have addressed myself to him without repugnance, because I know his noble and elevated sentiments. He has generosity of soul, and would believe in the sincerity of my promises. How, indeed, could he refuse to judge with indulgence of what are termed political delinquencies; whose liberal ideas, were he not a sovereign, would rank him among their most illustrious partisans? But the unhappy fate that

pursues me has decreed that I should depend upon a government directed by courtiers who are the zealous abettors of absolute power. Blinded by their pusillanimous prejudices, proscription is their only weapon, nor is it possible to persuade them that clemency and justice are the best safeguards of thrones!—Well, since I must perforce adopt such a line of conduct, I shall employ corruption to gain over to my purpose the will of corrupted men. Whatever it cost me—whatever be the sum that their avarice may exact, I should prefer gorging it to degrading myself by unworthy solicitations."

In thus arguing, La Cesia followed the impulse of his own disinterested temper; but without recollecting that the same contempt of riches which made him so ready to sacrifice them to principle, had led him to neglect the means of securing the resources necessary for his

purpose. It was now no longer possible, when every acre of his property was subjected to a decree of sequestration, to attempt to borrow on a security so compromised. He might, indeed, address himself to such friends as had been more prudent than himself; but his delicacy recoiled at the idea of asking for a sum in loan, which he meant to employ in an endeavour to separate himself for ever from a cause which they had mutually sworn to support while they had life.

In the midst of these cogitations, it suddenly occurred to him that his uncle at Milan, who was recently deceased, might very probably have left him a legacy, as he had often declared it to be his intention. In that case he had no doubt that the Abbé Benutto, who possessed the confidence of the deceased, and who was sincerely devoted to the whole of the

family, would faithfully surrender to him what had been deposited in his hands, if he had succeeded in extricating it from the rapacious grasp of the Austrian agents. In this hope the count took the road to the capital of Lombardy; but on arriving there he found that the Abbé Benutto had removed, after rendering an account of the property of which he was executor, to the Chartreuse at Pavia: to Pavia, therefore, which is but a few hours' journey from Milan, La Cesia proceeded in search of him.

In the situation and destiny of this ancient monastery every thing is remarkable; and by a singular and extraordinary favour, both war and revolution have constantly respected it. It was to this edifice that Francis I. was conducted after the battle of Pavia, in which his courage lost him the victory. The ground

where this memorable conflict was fought has been completely turned up; and it is now impossible to perceive there, any more than elsewhere, a single trace of that of which the results were at the time so great. One monument remains of all that marked its history—the noble and dignified remark of the vanquished king.* Of all monuments, noble thoughts are the most permanent. For half a century the monks of Chartreuse have been driven out from their superb dwelling, which during three hundred years they had never ceased their toil in decorating; and which is in consequence one of the most beautiful as well as most singular in Italy. It is especially remarkable for its valuable mosaics: where the jasper, the onyx, the cornelian,

* "Tout est perdu hors l'honneur," was the expression of the gallant Francis, in his account of a battle that broke his power for ever.

the lapis-lazuli, shaded with admirable ingenuity, form pictures of the most precious finish and of imperishable splendour. This immense work was very nearly finished when Joseph II. mounted the throne. He suppressed the monastery, dismissed the workmen, and seized the funds destined for their payment. The arts, however, that had been fostered by the seminary, protected in their turn the edifice which they decorated: the reformer dared not to destroy so sacred a repertory, but appointed as its keepers three priests, whose special duty it was to look after the church; and one of these was the Abbé Benutto. La Cesia requested to be conducted to the ancient cell that he inhabited: the good old man did not at first recognise him, but as soon as he was announced, he embraced him with tears in his eyes.

"It is then my lot," said he, "to hold in my arms the offspring of that noble family to which I have consecrated my life! Count Jerome, I thought you lost for ever in the disasters of the revolution, and the poor marquis, your uncle, fully participated in my solicitude; and his deepest subject of regret on his death-bed was, that he was unable to insure to you a fortune independent of political persecution."

"I am aware," replied the count, "of my uncle's friendship; and I have more than once said to myself, that had I been but prudent enough to follow his counsel and yours, I should have been spared many useless vexations. But the past is no longer ours, and therefore let us attend to the future. Know then, my dear abbé, that I have for ever renounced all hazardous enterprises, and that my wish henceforth

is to live in peace, and to hand down to posterity that name which I received from my ancestors."

These last expressions charmed the honest ecclesiastic. "Is it really true," said he, a ray of joy beaming in his eyes, "that Providence has inspired into you as much wisdom and reason as you inherit courage and genius? The satisfaction that I enjoyed in seeing you again was, I confess to you frankly, somewhat clouded by a fear that the impetuosity of your character would lead you into new dangers."

"You may dismiss your fears," replied the count, "I now am anxious for nothing but to make my peace with the government; but as that peace must be purchased, I have come hither to inquire into the fortune of my deceased uncle, and to see if it will furnish me with the means."

"Come this way," said the abbé, leading the way into a small chamber which served as an oratory, "and you shall see at once all I have succeeded in saving."

La Cesia cast his eyes round the chamber, without noticing any object that merited attention, when Benitto showed him a small smoked picture over the reading-desk, and said to him with a smile—"Are you not struck then with the beauty of that picture?"

"You are sporting with me," replied Cesia, "that is a mere daub; there is neither design nor colouring in it."

"If you examine it more closely, you will perhaps like it better," said the abbé; and taking out a nail or two, and raising up the piece of linen that covered it, he displayed to the wondering count one of the finest works of Corregio painted on the pannel which served

as the frame. There was no possibility of mistaking the exquisite grace and the power of expression that characterise the rarest and finest specimens of that great master. La Cesia possessed in a high degree the quick and delicate taste which has the appearance of an innate faculty among most Italians. He gazed on the picture with admiration. "I need not tell you the history of this picture," said the abbé, "it is well known to amateurs, and made part of the splendid collection of Cardinal Litta, who bequeathed it on his death-bed to the marquis, your uncle, who was his friend; this was but a short time before the commencement of the first revolution of our unhappy country. As soon as I had an opportunity of witnessing the scientific rapacity of the French gentlemen, as well of those who acted on the government account as of those who were acting on their

own, I thought that the surest way of preserving the family property in this master-piece would be to withdraw it from every eye. I myself accordingly clothed the wooden pannel on which it was painted with that gross envelope; and that disgrace which has sheltered it for fifteen years from requisitions and confiscations has saved it in the last instance in which its safety was hazarded. When the Austrians, our new oppressors, sealed up the whole of the effects left by your uncle, I went forward and claimed as an object of devotion set apart for my peculiar use this picture, and nobody attempted to dispute my claim. My constant intention was to convey it to you; and had I not succeeded, as I now have, in doing so, I should have left it to this church as one of its most splendid ornaments."

"I am deeply affected, my dear abbé," replied

the count, "by your ingenuity of zeal, which has led you to adopt such a means of serving my interest; but how am I now to proceed, in order to dispose to the best advantage of the treasure which you have preserved for me?"

"That picture," said the priest, "is well worthy of figuring in the first collection in Europe; and there can be no doubt that in ordinary times it might have been most advantageously disposed of without its quitting Italy. But you are but too well aware that the greatest fortunes here have suffered serious diminutions; and I am not aware of any nation, save only the English, who have the means of purchasing, at a suitable price, so valuable a piece: for these islanders have, I know not how, contrived to double their wealth, even while subsidising the whole of Europe. Were I in your place, I would carry the picture to London."

" That would take me a great time."

" Then you can go to Rome by way of Florence. These two cities are at this moment the places of rendezvous of all the rich travellers of the English nation."

La Cesia thought the advice a good one, and he determined to follow it. He thanked most heartily the honest abbé for his care and his counsel, promised to see him without fail when he returned, and the very next day set out for Tuscany with his picture.

CHAPTER IX.

La Cesia, when he arrived at Florence, immediately had recourse to a picture-dealer, whose address Abbé Benutto had given to him; his name was Stampato: he was an excellent connoisseur, like almost all men of his profession; but he was at the same time an honest man, which very few of them are. Scarce had he looked at the Corregio, which the count proposed to sell, than he cried out with mingled admiration and regret—"Yes it has, I see it

has, the delicate and learned touch of the divine Allegri! and, alas! I see also another picture lost to dear Italy. It will be carried away to be buried, along with so many others, in that land which nature frowns and fortune smiles on: that England, where, to use the language of the sacred writ, 'they have eyes, but they do not see; ears, but they hear not; and an heart, but they do not understand.' Of old, this was not the case; then our prelates and our grandees were the enlightened protectors of the arts, and prided themselves in their superb galleries; but now, where are they? Most of them are ruined; and those who are not, fear to display by any outward token that their fortune has escaped the general shipwreck. No sale of the slightest importance can be effected without having recourse to the English. I must however add, count, that

the present moment is by no means favourable; those who passed the winter in Pisa and Florence have now left us for Switzerland: we have nobody here but Lord Spleeny, an old fellow immensely rich, but excessively capricious; however, as he is not destitute of taste, it is not impossible he may be prevailed on to bid for such an acquisition. I shall run this moment and inform him of its arrival; there is no time to be lost, for a person has been here this very moment to say that he is on the eve of quitting Italy."

Stampato went hastily away as he finished these words; and the count, taking advantage of the leisure that the absence of the picture-dealer afforded him, went to visit the celebrated gallery which is renowned over all other collections; and which, in fact, may be revisited an indefinite number of times, and

always with new pleasure. He rapidly traversed the long halls that lead to the octagon-room which goes by the name of the tribunal; that genuine sanctuary of the arts, to which none but master-pieces are admitted. It is there alone that the admirer of art may be gratified at once with all that is perfect in ancient sculpture, and all that is excellent in the modern school of painting. There the age of Leo X. is brought in contact with that of Pericles; and in this unique combination the former would have borne off the victory had not the Medicean Venus, whose exquisite beauty and harmony defies all rivalry as it does all comparison, stepped in to maintain the superiority of the latter. The universal admiration which that matchless statue attracts depends unquestionably on the more than human beauty of its outline. Its perfection

nature has never risen to; it was genius alone that could conceive and create those wonders to which taste, whether learned or uninstructed, has in all ages so eagerly paid homage. For a long time did La Cesia remain wrapt in ecstasy before this finished exemplar of beauty and of grace; but the group of Niobe and her family was passed by with a slight notice. The strong expression of maternal grief caused in him a painful emotion, which even the exquisite skill of the sculptor could not efface, similar to what he had before experienced at Rome on beholding the Laocoon. He was about to leave the gallery when one of the keepers, who had formerly known him, proposed to conduct him to the Palace Pitti, by means of that long corridor which in its course traverses nearly half the city, and passes above several houses, as well as one of the bridges of

the Arno. This passage, which has the appearance of a lofty aqueduct, served the family of Medicis as a safe and assured means of communication during times of trouble, between their own residence and the palace of the government.* It was not without deep interest that the duke revisited this superb edifice, pre-

* A recent event, after a lapse of three centuries from its erection, justified the political providence of the clear-sighted Florentines. When, in the midst of profound peace, Napoleon sent a detachment to seize the person of the grand-duke for the purpose of his being ransomed, as were the other princes of Italy, it was by means of this very passage that he succeeded in rescuing himself from the rapacious grasp of the conqueror. The Palace Pitti was beleaguered; but while the ministers of the grand-duke kept amusing the French commander by a pretended negotiation, their sovereign had reached the old palace by means of the corridor; and there mounting a fleet horse, he rapidly rode away, nor was he ever afterwards laid hold of.

senting as it does so fine a model of Tuscan architecture; and whose plain and almost rough exterior presents a very marked and singular contrast to the splendour of the interior, and to the magnificent collection of paintings, which combines the master-pieces of all the celebrated schools of modern art. It is here, to select but one example out of a thousand, that the traveller may behold the delightful Madonna della Sedia, whose beauties have been reproduced so frequently by the pencil, the crayon, and the burin; and which is as commonly known and appreciated in every quarter of Europe as are the poems of Ariosto or Tasso. Here, too, in the private cabinet of the grand-duke, may now be seen the famous Venus of Canova, which La Cesia inspected with all the attention that the most celebrated work of that great master so well

deserved. "This is no goddess," he at length exclaimed, "but it is one of the loveliest of women. And yet," added he, with the republican pride which was characteristic of his despotism, "fair nature has not degenerated—then whence the difference? is it not that in the arid soil of slavery genius must ever languish? If the Cleomenes and the Phidias, those thrice illustrious citizens of enfranchised Greece, had been born subjects of Italian kings, they would never have felt or given expression to loftier sentiments than this."

The count left the Palace Pitti at a still early hour; and the church of Santa Croce, in front of which he was obliged to pass in his way homeward, standing invitingly open, he was tempted to enter once more that superb tomb, in which are congregated, if we believe the

Baronne de Stael, a more illustrious assemblage of dead than any other cemetery of Europe can boast. The entrance into this chamber of death is, as it were, guarded from profane intrusion by two of these great departed—we mean Galileo and Michael Angelo; a little farther in advance rises the monument of one who is, after a lapse of centuries, still the first of Italian prose-writers—the witty and licentious Boccacio; facing the entrance is the tomb of the celebrated politician Machiavelli, where by a singular contrast a name, which in every other nation conveys the strongest reproach that good faith can heap on a statesman, is commemorated by his fellow-citizens with the splendid homage of a most pompous and flattering epitaph.*

* "Machiavelli—

"Nullum tanto nomini par eulogium."

But amongst all the tombs in the church of the Holy Cross, that which rivetted the attention of La Cesia most was the tomb of Alfieri. He had known in his early youth the splendid and irregular genius whose silent remains that block of marble now covered! Canova has depictured Italy as weeping over the buried bard; and nothing can possibly be finer than the form of the figure, which is of a colossal magnitude, and whose expression of sorrow is sublimely pourtrayed.

The count gazed on the work of the sculptor, while he exclaimed—"The great artist has for once assumed the chisel without the inspiration that ordinarily guided its labours. Doubtless the friends of Alfieri bitterly wept his fall; they sorrowed while they thought on the value of their loss; but to his country he has not perished: not a day passes but, from the one

extremity of the peninsula to the other, some soul is elevated, some heart is touched, by his immortal tragedies; and every class of the nation feels their ennobling influences in the generous sentiments they inspire. Incomparable bard! simple in thy fables as energetic in thy language, thou disdainedst those petty artifices which seek to facilitate, by the aid of dramatic illusion, that success which thou commandest by the irresistible charms of thy simple majesty."

If in the eulogium that La Cesia pronounced on the great tragic poet of modern Italy there was some mixture of exaggeration, it may be easily explained by the conformity of their position in society, and still more by their similarity of character. Like Alfieri, the count descended from one of the first families in Piedmont, and like him, the dignity of such a

birth was indulged till it bordered on pride. Their political opinions were the same; and, what is also singular, those ardent friends of liberty entertained no less hatred of equality than of despotism, and despised the mob as much as they detested their tyrants. It was not without pleasure that La Cesia used to repeat the saying of Alfieri to those who reproached him for the violence of his aversion of the French revolution after having not only approved that great event, but even celebrated it in his verses. "I knew only its great points then," said he; "I did not know its petty ones."

The epitaph that is cut on the tomb of Alfieri contains only these five words—

"To Victor Alfieri Aloysia Stolberg."

La Cesia now looked on this simple epitaph

for the first time, and he was deeply affected by it.—"And so," said he, "Aloysia countess of Albany, the wife of the last of the Stuarts, who enjoyed at Rome all the honours of kingly dignity, preferred being known as the mistress of an immortal poet to regal greatness, and was not the less esteemed on account of her deliberate choice! And why may not I too endeavour to procure for the object of my affections a brilliant and honourable place in the memories of men? I too," he continued, reverting to the splendid success that signalised his early homage of the lyric muse—"I too am a poet: so Byron declared, and Italy approved his judgment. If I have ceased to employ my pen, it is not that the sacred fire is extinguished in my bosom; love can double the energies of genius! and it is yet time enough. Alfieri had more years than I have when he entered on

that career which he rendered so splendid. Are all dramatic combinations exhausted? No. Doubtless in the wide regions of possibility, in those regions to which common-minded authors possess no access, there yet lie slumbering a whole host of beings, grand in character, powerful in passion, which wait but the call of a creative imagination to wake them to life and form.—I will invoke them: I will bring them forth on the stage of Italy. My country, which, oppressed as she is, no misfortune can vilify, will applaud the efforts of my generous muse; and the heart of my well-beloved will beat high when she hears of my triumph. I have given up the agitations of politics, the hazards of its dangerous game, the most fair seeming of which so often deceives the lovers of freedom. But no such terrible results await those who are content to addict themselves to

the drama; or who labour merely to inspire into men a love of virtue and an abhorrence of vice and of tyranny. That is after all the noblest employ of exalted talent; and that, henceforth, shall be the sole object I shall strive to attain."

The count, giving free course to the warmth of his imagination, pronounced these last words aloud, with a vehemence that partook of enthusiasm. He thought he was alone; the church, at the time, had the appearance of being deserted, and he had seen no one within its walls but two or three veiled females at a distance, near the bottom of the vast nave, who seemed as little endowed with life or motion as the statues of the saints before which they were prostrated. There were, however, two personages in one of the side aisles, at no great distance from him, who could sufficiently hear

his words, though he could not perceive them. These were Stampato and Lord Spleeny. The proposal of purchasing the Corregio had gratified the English nobleman, whose collection did not happen to contain any picture by that celebrated master. Eager to conclude the bargain, because he intended to set off from Florence next day, he proceeded to the hotel where the count had alighted, and not finding him there, he had wandered into the church of Santa Croce, which was close by. While engaged in copying a curious inscription from one of the ancient tombs, Stampato happened to see La Cesia, who was leaning on one of the pillars that support the lofty arch in front of the tomb of Alfieri, and pointed him out to his noble companion. The upturned eye of the young poet gazing towards heaven sparkled with the inspiration he felt, and his mellow and sonorous

voice appeared as if formed to move all hearts. Lord Spleeny was greatly struck with the nobleness of his stature and the beauty of his features; and he was especially delighted to hear him express sentiments so perfectly in accordance with his own; and hardly had La Cesia ceased to speak, when he advanced up to him, and holding out his hand—"Count," said he, "I bless the chance that has favoured me with an introduction to such a man as you seem to be: whatever be the value of your picture, you possess, in a generous soul and elevated sentiments, a treasure which I prize infinitely higher."

La Cesia replied to this unexpected compliment politely, but reservedly; and as Lord Spleeny appeared pressed for time, he instantly conducted him to his lodgings. The long stay of the English nobleman in the classic land of the

fine arts had developed in him the taste which he inherited from nature; and the admiration that he felt in beholding the picture he vainly attempted to conceal.

"Your lordship will not fail to remark," said Stampato, "that you may effect this purchase in perfect safety; the genuineness of this master-piece is proved by evidence the most indisputable, both by the signature and by the particular marks of originality; it is, moreover, well known to the amateurs: in fact, there is not a family in the kingdom whose genealogy is more capable of being clearly traced."

"That," replied his lordship, "is precisely the thing that I care nothing about. When I set myself to judge of a picture, I betake me to the evidence of my eyes and not to documents, which, saving your presence, gentlemen, are as easily fabricated as those titles of honour which

you mention, and for which I care still less than I do for certificates of originality. Bring me a copy better painted and more beautiful than the original, and I'll give you a higher price for it."

This heretical offer made the merchant shudder, and the count smile.

"All I wish now to know," his lordship went on, "is the price of this Corregio; I don't wish to pay more than the fair value for any thing I purchase, but at the same time I won't take advantage of the wants of the vender to obtain it for less."

"That is a noble method of managing business," replied La Cesia; "and to respond to it, as I feel I ought, I beg to declare my perfect readiness to abide by the valuation that may be fixed by Stampato, or by any other person

skilled in those matters whom your lordship may see fit to select."

"Stampato be it then," said Lord Spleeny, "provided he pronounce the value at once."

"Really, my lord," said Stampato, "your lordship's declaration embarrasses me not a little. Before the revolution, we had in Italy a regular price for such specimens of art; but now, sales are so rare and prices so various, it is impossible to know beforehand what we may reckon on. The picture market has, in fact, been transferred to England, the rendezvous of all the capitals of the world. If, however, you insist on having my opinion, I don't think that I am deceived in saying that this small picture, on account of its exquisite state of preservation, would not fetch less at a sale in Pall Mall than fifteen hundred pounds sterling; and I

have no doubt that in paying that sum, your lordship is only laying out money which, whenever you feel inclined, you may draw in again."

"That is a process of which I seldom think," replied the Englishman; "my only object in these purchases is to indulge my whim, and to escape for a few minutes from the listlessness of existence. Last year, for instance, while I was at Venice, I purchased a palace on the Brenta, and I caused the whole of my marbles and antiques from my residence in Lancashire to be transported to it; but I have not, and probably never shall visit it, for the humidity of the climate is bad for my asthma. The bustle however of giving orders and directions for the removal occupied me very agreeably for several weeks. And besides, the continually increasing wealth of Great Britain is gradually augmenting the

value of my property there without the slightest exertion on my part, and I am thus saved the necessity of studying great economy in my expenditure. But at the same time I make it a rule," continued his lordship, "never to give way to the exorbitant demands of cupidity or dishonesty; and Stampato can well remember the process which I carried on but last winter against a coach-proprietor, on account of fifteen pauls that he demanded above what had been agreed on. The pleadings cost me, I confess, more than a couple of hundred of those same pauls, and I had to remain five days freezing with cold in a miserable inn; but I would have remained there six months, sooner than have allowed myself to be cheated by that rascal. Resistance, energetical and persevering resistance to oppression wherever he meets it, that is the distinguishing feature of an Englishman!"

"Your lordship ought to add," observed La Cesia courteously, "that England is the only country where the love of justice supplies those who happen to be injured by fraud or violence with the gratuitous and disinterested support of their fellow-citizens, a support which they nowhere else can look for, except in the magistrates appointed and paid for the maintenance of the laws. In France, for instance, every one is shocked at an act of injustice, and every tongue is loud in censuring it; but let the injured party aim at procuring redress for the injury he has sustained, let those sympathising friends be called on to put forth their hands, to devote their time, above all, to employ their purses in his cause, their levity and selfishness paralyse all their efforts, and the sufferer remains unsuccoured. And indeed,

every where, except in England, the same rule obtains."

The patriotic pride of Lord Spleeny was more flattered by this compliment than he was altogether willing to show. On the contrary, giving free course to his caustic humour in doing the honours of his country, of which he was yet well content to listen to the praises: "That good-nature," said he, "of which we are so proud, joined to all our energy of purpose, does not prevent us from possessing a claim to rank among the greatest fools of Christendom. Every one knows that our criminal code is barbarous, and that our lawyers are greater plunderers than the thieves whom they hang. And what say you, count, to our wives, sold in the market like so many horses with halters round their necks; to our infamous Gretna-Green marriages; to our boxing matches; to our

system of impressment; our rotten boroughs; and finally, to that hereditary race of ministerial corrupters and corrupted chambers? So much for national manners and national institutions. As to individuals, it is admitted, that there are more lunatics in our little island than in all the world beside; and if to these be added all the persons who by courtesy are denominated eccentric, and who in any other quarter would be placed in confinement, or at least put under guardianship, you will easily perceive how small is the wisdom of glorious Albion."

After this diatribe, which assuredly Lord Spleeny would not have suffered from the lips of a stranger, he hastily discussed the affair of the picture. The price being fixed, the only thing that remained was to arrange the mode of payment; for this purpose he gave Count La Cesia a draft on his banker for fifteen hundred

pounds; and as the manners as well as the sentiments of the young Piedmontese nobleman had singularly pleased him, he added, taking him in a kindly manner by the hand, which he shook with a heartiness and vigour that would have made a man less firm than the count cry out under the pain of the pressure—"If you imagine at any time I can do you a service, apply to me frankly. As you seem to know something of the English, you can judge whether their offers of service are sincere or not, although they dislike making a display of them."

CHAPTER X.

La Cesia having thus happily finished the business that had conducted him to Florence, made haste to return to Lombardy. He changed the check that he had received from Lord Spleeny with the banker for a letter of credit in Milan, and taking his seat in the vehicle of the mail courier, by the evening of the following day he had arrived once more in the capital. His great object now was to dispose in his favour the agents of government, who were soon

to pronounce on his application. Public opinion, which in such matters frequently calumniates and exaggerates, had represented them as accessible to corruption, and the thing was extremely probable; still, as it admitted of some doubt, it was necessary that he should manage with extreme circumspection, for fear of compromising himself. Chance for once stood his friend. He happened to know one of the partners of the house of N., on which he held the letter of credit, to be a zealous though cautious partisan of liberal ideas, and he had often met him at Vienna. He did not hesitate to confide to him the desire he felt to enter into possession of his property, and the obstacles which he had reason to apprehend, and he ended by requesting his advice and assistance. The banker replied, that his business required of him the utmost prudence, and that he could

not directly mix himself up with such an affair, but he pointed out to him an intelligent man, to whom he might without scruple confide the management of it.

This was a Frenchman, whom the turmoil of the revolution had driven to Lombardy some twenty years before, and who was exceedingly expert in settling contested matters such as La Cesia's. He was from that province in the north-west of France whose natives are proverbial for concealing a great deal of cunning under a simple and clownish exterior. Their understanding also is commonly correct, and their prudence great, although perhaps their honesty of purpose sometimes supplies the place of rectitude of action. They are indeed reproached with being but little troubled with scruples in their choice of means, and of frequently employing for the objects of

chicanery that knowledge of law to which none of them is a stranger. Valville, in a word (that was the Frenchman's name), was a Norman.

La Cesia without scruple confided his affairs to his management. "Your case," said he, after listening attentively to the history that La Cesia had given him of its bearings, "is doubtless rather a difficult one; but, so far as I can see into it, it is by no means desperate. The Austrian government, which was terribly alarmed during the Piedmontese rebellion, has now completely recovered its confidence; yet in its invariable, or rather immovable policy, it continues to persist in its system of severity: and though the prisoners of state who are detained in the fortresses of Moravia, and in the old convent of San Giorgio at Venice, no longer run any risk of their lives, it is not the

less certain that they will continue to suffer in their personal liberty and in their property. It would be quite useless for you to invoke the clemency of the sovereign; but there is yet a means that I consider to be an efficient one, and that is to appeal to his justice. The grand object is to prove that your name ought not to have been placed on the proscribed list at all; and any thing may be proved in this country by the employment of a little money, and a little skill. Take example by what was practised in France after the reign of terror. The emigrants who returned at that time from foreign countries all found means without the slightest difficulty, of furnishing legal proof to the republican authorities that they had never quitted the French territory. I have no doubt that you can with equal facility obtain authentic certificates and attestations in regular form,

by means of which we shall prove beyond all dispute that you have never ceased to reside in Lombardy. We may say, for instance, that you were all the time of the troubles lying sick at some remote village; and if your name has appeared on the muster-roll of the insurgents, it must of course have been some distant relation who was confounded with you, or else some adventurer who had assumed your name and titles. The documents thus procured will be sent to be examined at the proper offices; and if they attempt to raise any difficulties, we know the way to bring them to reason. Their report will not fail to be favourable, provided it be well paid for; and the viceroy on receiving it, assisted by a council composed of men every way as honourable as himself, cannot refuse to reinstate you in your rights."

This plan, which appeared to be more feasible

than any other he could devise, the count adopted; and Valville, who was perfectly skilled in this sort of intrigues, assisted him in getting up a sort of tale, in which they kept close to the more recent events of his life, and filled up with as much appearance of probability as possible those parts which it was important to keep in the back-ground. The following, after mature reflection, was the story on which they decided:—La Cesia, it will be recollected, had remained at Turin, when the Countess Gradiska in the spring of the year left it for France: they determined to declare, on the contrary, that he had accompanied her on her journey; that when they reached Savoy he had fallen sick of a dangerous malady; that the countess, who was under the necessity of proceeding to Paris, had left him in a village on their route with his groom, and one of her

women to look after him, but that his illness getting daily more serious, and at length his death being momentarily looked for, these faithless domestics had plundered their master, and fled across the Alps; that they had, however, profited but little by their robbery, for the groom on arriving at Turin had lost all the money, had abandoned his female companion, and enrolled himself under his master's name (as he possessed all his papers) in a regiment of cavalry belonging to the insurgents, that was at that moment being raised. From the period of the battle of Novara, the tale went on, in which he had been severely wounded, no one knew what had become of him. That circumstance did not, however, prevent the Piedmontese government from placing on the proscribed list the name of Count Jerome de la Cesia, which was

found enrolled in the muster-list of the regiment.

The fable was well got up, and in a very short time the proofs by which it was attempted to substantiate it gave it every appearance of truth. Valville happened to have relatives in Savoy; he sent thither an intelligent emissary, who for a very trifling sum procured from an innkeeper of a tavern at Aiguebelle all the attestations that he wanted; and he procured in addition, with very little difficulty, the certificate of a country surgeon, which distinctly bore that he had attended the count during the progress of a severe malady, the symptoms of which he detailed as well as their regular progress. Nothing, in fact, was wanting even to the apothecary's bill, who was declared to have furnished the medicines for the patient, and who now came forward to claim payment of them.

The whole of these documents were of course duly legalised, stamped, and countersigned, by the competent authorities, and in every point of view incapable of being impeached. And in order to dissipate even a shadow of doubt, should any remain in the minds of the judges, Valville bethought him of producing an irrefragable witness in the *femme de chambre* of the countess, whom, by a most happy chance, he had succeeded in finding out. The person that he employed for the purpose of acting this rather delicate part was a young woman of a somewhat equivocal character, but bold and ready-witted, and one whom he had known intimately while he lived in Brescia. Thither Valville went to find her, and made sure of her honesty by a bribe of twenty-five napoleons.

When the whole of this piece of machinery

was fairly set a going, the petition, accompanied by the original documents transmitted from Savoy, were delivered by Valville to the proper office in the police department; and all that remained to be done was to insinuate to the clerk who was to take charge of them that although the cause was in every respect a just one, nevertheless a very handsome present would not the less accompany a prompt and favourable decision.

Valville hoped that this promise, which, without being formally accepted, was not rejected, would abridge the excessive tardiness of the Austrian officiaries; but the writings in all such cases are so numerous, and the progress of business so slow, that at the end of a month the application seemed but little more advanced than it was the first day. It was then that Valville, in order to have a plausible motive

for pressing a determination, resolved to produce the alleged *femme de chambre* of the Countess Gradiska. He brought the female accordingly before the commissary of police, and there declared with much vehemence his intention to prosecute her as an accomplice in the robbery of Count la Cesia, unless she declared before the officers of justice all that she knew of that matter. The girl trembled and wept; and at length, after a delay and resistance to this appeal that seemed inspired by a feeling of shame, she gave a detail of all the particulars of the journey to Savoy in the same terms in which they had been dictated to her. The magistrate, who was far from having any reason to suspect her veracity, limited his interrogatory to the questions ordinarily addressed to a witness; and she was about to retire when, on a whisper from one of his assistants, he

called her back in order to examine her papers; and as all of them were strictly conformable to her declaration, and also in perfectly regular form, they were restored to her, and she was merely requested to leave, in case she should be wanted, a note of her residence.

Next day Valville procured from the register a copy of this examination; and, fortified by that document, he proceeded to the office of police, and pressed with the most earnest and urgent entreaty for a decision, which he observed could no longer be a subject of the slightest difficulty, insomuch as the *alibi* of the petitioner had been proved in the most clear and demonstrative manner, not only by authentic documents, but by the production of an important witness. These arguments were not unplausible; but we have generally observed that French vivacity, instead of stirring up,

rather serves to render the phlegm of an Austrian more settled than ordinary.

Valville was told that the last document then handed in would certainly be docketed along with the rest; that the affair of his client had its regular number on the file, and would be adjudged in its turn; and when he requested the officer to be so good as fix some time when he might expect that event, the latter drily replied, and not without an air of irony, that if the period did not occur during the course of that year, it probably would occur before the end of the next.

Valville retired in despair to report this answer to La Cesia, who at length wearied out of all patience, and as much irritated as vexed, determined to hazard the risk of a personal application to the head of the police department, whose honesty, according to all reports,

was much more than doubtful. He did not, however, go so far in the rashness of his importunities as to demand an audience in his own name; he presented himself as M. de Noirval, a French merchant, thus giving to himself the description that appeared in the passport of which he was the bearer. It was only after a lapse of three days that he was admitted to the presence of the great man, who, before giving our readers any account of the interview, it may not be necessary to state was that very Steinmetz who has figured rather too often in the course of this history, and who at that moment held the office of head director of police at Milan. The countenance of the count was noble and even imposing, which, joined to his elegance of manners, did not fail to procure him a suitable reception. The coarse features

and arrogant air of Steinman did not less affect the count, though with other feelings; he therefore hastily entered on the subject of his visit, by telling him that there was an affair, the documents connected with which had been a long time deposited in the office under his direction, and that he had come to converse with him on the subject; it was one, he added, on which M. Steinman would soon have to pronounce judgment. Scarcely, however, had he mentioned the name of the case La Cesia, when the director-general interrupted him by a loud horse-laugh—

"Oh, oh!" said he, "it is Count de la Cesia's case you come about, is it? a Piedmontese noble that same La Cesia, eh? a man of some parts, but as real a rebel as the devil himself. He finished the game by getting

himself wounded at Novara, did he not? like a fool as he was. You see I am up to the whole matter."

The count coloured with anger, but contrived to restrain himself, and Steinman continued—

"Well, sir, you must know that a very plausible petition, and one that was in fact calculated to excite the sensibility of his imperial highness the viceroy in no small degree, has been presented in the name of this count: but there is one fact you can hardly know; and that is, that the trickery of this petition has just been discovered. The intriguers, who acted as agents for this La Cesia—what do you think? they had actually the hardihood to bring forward a pretended *femme de chambre* to give a little additional weight to what is, I have no doubt, a tissue of pure falsehood.

Happily the vigilance of one of the officers of his majesty discovered the *ruse*. Whilst the commissary of police was taking down the evidence of this would-be *femme de chambre*, one of my fellows, and the cunningest rascal among them, who happened by accident to be present—the rogue has the eye of an hawk—surprised the girl and the pretty gentleman who produced her interchanging glances of intelligence, and the latter threatening her, as he thought. No more was required for our folks; and they speedily discovered that this lady, who according to her tale had but lately arrived from Savoy, had in reality reached Milan by the Brescia diligence. There," added he, with an air of mockery, "is news respecting the affair of Count la Cesia, in which you appear to take so deep an interest. I am most happy to communicate it. He an-

nounced in his petition that he intended to come hither in order to urge his suit in person; and I shall not disguise from you that orders have been despatched to the frontiers to detain him as soon as he makes his appearance. And now, sir, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning."

He accompanied his finishing sentence with a disdainful bow; and at the same time, by a waive of his hand, pointed to the door. It is easy to conceive what vexation and irritation the unhappy count experienced on beholding the whole of the prospects, on which he had been building up the happiness of his life, thus destroyed at a single blow. Any other man would have given himself up to despair; but La Cesia was possessed of great strength of character, and his wit was fertile in resources. Far from retiring, he advanced towards Stein-

man; and addressing him with admirable coolness—"One word, Mr. Director," said he, "before we part. I am neither the relation nor the friend of the person in whose behalf I came to solicit you; but I have a pretty strong interest in the arrangement of his affairs. My object is to disengage a considerable portion of my property, which I find in danger of being compromised, in consequence of my connexion with him; and for that have I come from Lyons to Milan, determined to make any sacrifice that may be necessary to insure success. The case is this:—I happened to be at Vienna in the spring of 1820; and Messrs. F., the court bankers, with whom our house had done business for more than twenty years, knowing that I had some unemployed capital, proposed that I should subscribe thirty thousand florins to a loan that they were then negoti-

ating for the Count de la Cenia, on the security of his marquisate of Lunato in the Bergamasco. I agreed to this mortgage, which appeared to me rather advantageous; and even before the formalities were legally executed, as I well knew the reputation of the count as a man of honour, I advanced the money to his order without scruple, in payment of his bills: I have them here in this pocket-book. A few days afterwards I was obliged to set out for Holland; and then I was obliged to go to England. I left to my friends the care of my affairs; but unhappily their own were embarrassed, and consequently they did not attend to mine; and the deed which would have secured my property was in consequence never executed. I was not aware of this fact until very lately, when I returned to France; and the same letter that made me acquainted with it told me that my

debtor was fled, and the whole of his property sequestrated. Now if it be definitively confiscated, then my debt, being a merely personal one, must necessarily be lost. If, on the contrary, the count be acquitted, I shall have my bills immediately registered, and get a mortgage on the property, and thus secure payment."

"Your condition," replied Steinman, "is a very nice one. It is a pity to see an honest merchant like you the dupe of an excess of confidence; but I see no help for it: and even you yourself, sir, after the details you have given me, must be aware that it is a matter that does not, of possibility, admit of any arrangement."

"That arrangement is impossible," interrupted La Cosia, in a lively tone; "I can by no means admit. There are obstacles and diffi-

culties doubtless; but they are not insuperable. Nay, I shall go farther: I shall show you that it depends on you alone, and that without the slightest breach of your duty, to bring the matter to a termination that will satisfy all parties concerned. Listen to me, the subject is worthy of your attention."

So saying he sat down on the form in front of the desk behind which Steinman stood, and made a sign for Steinman to sit also. The latter, as if struck and subdued by the influence of that natural superiority which enables its possessor to exercise over others a power altogether independent of their will, sat down, and listened while the count went on.

"First of all," said he, "I shall entreat you to observe that the deposition of the *femme de chambre* has at bottom nothing to do with the

business. In fact, grant that she was not with La Cesia in Savoy as she deposed, does it by any means follow that the latter served in the ranks of the insurgents? Most assuredly not; and you must admit that there is not a tribunal in Europe that would condemn him on any such presumption, while so many authentic and undisputed documents attest the truth of his allegations. At the same time, I confess, one false testimony furnishes legitimate ground for suspicion as well as unfavourable presumptions against the party —."

Steinman here interrupted him—

"When a man has right on his side, Mr. Noirval, he has not recourse to criminal expedients. It is evident to me that all the documents are falsified from the first to the ——."

"Stop there!" cried La Cesia, interrupting

him in his turn, "your love of justice makes you go too far. I see," continued he, lowering his voice and assuming a confidential air, "that I must talk to you frankly. Well, then, Mr. Director, your judgment was just, the girl was from Brescia; she never was in Savoy in her life: in fact it was I—I, sir, that suggested the little trick, against which, notwithstanding, my honesty revolted; but I am hard pressed, and the interminable delays of your officers impelled me to practise it. But, notwithstanding that, you may safely rely on the attestations furnished by the count; they are perfectly authentic, and under all circumstances you will find them sufficient; you have only to write to Savoy in order to get as many more as you require in support of them. For myself, what I principally desire is to get possession as soon as possible of my property; and as I know ex-

perimentally what is required in all countries in order to stimulate the activity of officers, I have taken my measures accordingly. Here are five hundred napoleons, the half of the sum that I destine for that purpose. I shall pay down the rest on receiving the definitive judgment: to this I pledge my word; and in every quarter of Europe it is well known that the word of a Noirval, as well as his signature, is as good as ready money."

In pronouncing these words, he emptied on the table a small leathern bag that held ten rouleaux, each containing fifty napoleons.

Steinman was evidently embarrassed. The considerable sum that glittered before him strongly tempted his cupidity; but withheld by the dread of compromising himself much more than by any conscientious scruples, he replied to the count—"You are ignorant of the cha-

racter, sir, of the department over which I have the honour to preside. Interest has nothing to do with its decisions. If the claim that you prefer is a just one, and supported as you assure me it is by authentic documents, I shall be the first to give you all the advantage of them; you may rely on that. In the meanwhile take back your money; the fees of office are extremely moderate, and in no case will they amount to even the twentieth part of the sum you have laid down."

"I shall not take back one farthing," replied La Cesia decidedly, for he perceived that the moment was a critical one. "I am well aware that you are overwhelmed with business; and when we ask for extraordinary labour, it is but reasonable that we should pay the value of it, and that he who has the trouble should receive the reward. I shall return in eight

days hence, and I shall then bring the remainder."

"Well," said the director of the police, "if you will insist on leaving this money here, we must look on it in the light of a deposit merely, which will be faithfully restored to you in case that the question is not decided in your favour."

"I shall not contemplate any such a result," hastily replied the count; "the success or failure depends entirely on yourself."

"I admit my report will weigh a good deal."

"I cannot doubt that all I receive I shall owe to you alone; and is it not quite natural in that case that you should accept of a small mark of my gratitude, which can do no possible injury to the government you so zealously serve, and which bestows on you for all your services so paltry a salary?"

"That is quite true," said Steinman, charmed

at being furnished with the excuse: "my salary is small enough, Heaven knows; and yet had I been a bachelor still it might have sufficed me, but as I am now a married man, with the prospect also of soon being a father, why I must reckon on some pretty heavy expenses. Not," he proceeded, drawing himself up, "that I have allied myself either to a mean or poor family; my wife has both titles and an estate; I believe in all the district of Como there is not a family that can vie in either with that of the Marquis Varèze."

Had a thunderbolt burst that moment at the feet of La Cesia and struck him dead to the ground, the change in his appearance would not have been more sudden and more frightful.

"Thus then," said he at last, in an interrupted and mournful voice, "thus then have I been betrayed!"

His eyes were haggard, his hair stood on end, his whole frame was shaken with convulsive throes: on a sudden, in a paroxysm of rage, he darted towards Steinman; and had he once grasped him in his nervous arms, he would have strangled him on the spot; but intrenched behind his desk he avoided La Cesia's grasp. This fit of fury continued but a moment; and when it passed the count instantly retired, casting a look of horror and disdain on the trembling and petrified director; and exclaiming as he moved to the door, "Tremble not thus, thou coward! I will not take thy life; my wrongs require a vengeance slower and more cruel in its operation."

Steinman remained alone in his apartment for a sufficient length of time to recover from the confusion into which so violent and so unexpected an attack had thrown him. Find-

ing every attempt to explain the motives of it impossible, he would have been almost tempted to believe that the whole scene had been an illusion that had abused his senses, had not the rouleaux of gold, which still remained on the table, proved that there was at least in some part of it a substantial reality.

CHAPTER XI.

VALVILLE, who felt uneasy at the very hazardous step which La Cesia had determined on taking with Steinman, had set out to meet him. He found him within a few yards of the office of the government walking with long and hurried steps, his eyes wildly wandering, and muttering to himself, as he hastened on, some unintelligible words. He eagerly accosted him, and requested to know how matters stood.

"I might have killed him," replied La

Cesia, with apparent calmness; "that was my first movement; but death is too little for him —death is too little for him." This expression he frequently repeated.

Valville, who was as much alarmed by his appearance as by his words, endeavoured in vain to calm his perturbed spirit, and at length, with no small difficulty, succeeded in getting him home to his lodgings. When there, he was speedily convinced of the unfortunate state to which the unhappy young man was reduced; his face was inflamed, his eyes were bloodshot; in a word, a burning fever, conversation without connexion, convulsive or irregular gestures, all announced that a delirium bordering on phrensy was beginning to seize his frame. The doctor who was called confirmed all the fears which such a train of symptoms indicated. Valville, in whom his connexion with the count

had inspired as much affection for his character as admiration of his talents, was sensibly affected by his lamentable condition, and determined to omit nothing that could recover him from it; and imagining that the presence of a person whom he knew to be devoted to him could not fail to be agreeable, and perhaps salutary, he set out for Pavia, and brought back thence the good Abbé Benutto, who came indeed with alacrity to soften the griefs of the last scion of a house which he almost looked on as his own.

During the journey, however, of the two friends, though of but a few hours, the disease had increased to a most alarming degree. It was not mere delirium, it was absolute insanity. The count uttered frightful cries, foamed at the mouth with rage, and tore in pieces whatever came within his reach. No one dared to approach him; but yet when he gazed on

Benutto his looks became milder in their expression, and intimated some recollection of friendship; but this glimmering of sense passed away as a glimpse of lightning. It was now necessary to adopt some efficacious means of preventing those who were called on to minister to him from suffering by his violence, or from the consequences that might ensue from its indulgence to his own person; but it was evident that no nurse of ordinary strength could restrain him under the influence of a malady which is well known to double or treble the ordinary powers of the body; and La Cesia when in health was of a most athletic frame. The Abbé Benutto, not willing to abandon him to the harshness of a public asylum, thought that the best way would be to place in charge of him some sure and faithful servant, who united great physical powers to indefatigable

assiduity. The person he selected was a German chasseur, whom the count's uncle, who had served in the Austrian army, had brought with him from Vienna. He had left him by his will a small annuity, which the abbé was charged to pay him by quarterly instalments. This man Benutto immediately set about to seek, and proposed to him to act as attendant on the nephew of his old master.

"The nephew of my master—of the marquis?" said the brave Karl, "I would go through fire for him."

The abbé thanked him as affectionately as if he had rendered him a personal service, and then conducted him to the house of Valville. They found the patient in a state of quietude, or rather of stupor, which had been induced by the extreme lassitude that had followed the hot fit of the fever. As he had now the use

of his senses, it was thought a good moment to introduce to him the faithful servant to whose superintendence he was about to be committed. Benutto, in presenting him to him, said that he had never quitted his uncle during the whole of his campaigns, and that he had even been wounded on one occasion in an attempt to defend him.

"I have no need of any one to look after me," replied La Cesia in a feeble voice, but with a tone of decision.

"My lord," replied Karl, assuming a military attitude, "I have been commanded to mount guard over you, that is my duty, and here I remain."

"What! in spite of me?" replied the count in a rage, for his impetuous character was not to be broken down either by misfortune or

suffering. "Leave the room this instant, or else——," and he raised his hand to strike him.

The chasseur, at the risk of receiving the blow, made a step forward, put one knee to the ground, and taking in his hands the lower part of the count's garment, he said with much feeling—"My duty is to serve the nephew of my master, and I cannot desert it."

There was something irresistible in this simple act, and in the words that accompanied it. La Cesia raised him up.

"So you are absolutely bent," said he, "on remaining with a miserable man? Well, then, if I live, I will supply the place of the master you have lost."

From that moment Karl found himself installed in the establishment of the count, and

placed so high in his affections, that even in his most furious fits he never got into a passion with Karl.

In the mean time Valville busied himself with as much activity as zeal in the cure of his unhappy friend. As he could not obtain at Milan any physician who had made the treatment of mental aberrations an object of special study, he thought of addressing himself to the celebrated Scarpa, whom he had known at Pavia. Scarpa immediately pointed out to him an old pupil of his, a native of Como, who had studied in England for two years under the celebrated Dr. Willis, (the famous physician of George III., who cured that monarch in his first delirium) and who had subsequently come to settle in his native country. Valville did not hesitate a moment. He set out for Como, hired on the brink of the lake, near the

entrance of the town, one of those pretty country dwellings, where every year so many English families come to spend the summer, and there took up his abode with La Cesia and the chasseur who waited on him.

Dr. Scalpelli, for he was the person to whom Scarpa alluded, previous to entering on the treatment of the patient that had been brought to him, wished to learn at as much length as possible his tastes, his habits, his character, the extent of his understanding, and above all, the cause, if possible, of his malady. Valville concealed nothing from him, unless it was the rank and the name of the patient, which he thought had no concern with the mode of cure. As to the accident which led to the loss of his reason, he attributed that to the sudden effect of terrible disappointment, that had at once and unexpectedly destroyed all the hopes on which the happiness of

his life depended. Having received this information, the physician occupied his first visit in examining with extreme care not only the pulse of his patient, but his countenance, his appearance, even his gestures. Scalpelli had received from nature the most precious of gifts to those who consecrate themselves to the study of an art which of all others demands the keenest observation, and where observation must of necessity serve as a guide to knowledge. His was one of those penetrating glances which seem to pierce into the soul through all the doublings and concealments of the human heart. La Cesia, on encountering his searching eye, involuntarily cast down his own; and as if a species of instinct had induced him to fear an investigation from which he could not escape, he kept his eyelids half closed so long as Scalpelli remained. The doctor did not wish to thwart

his patient's humour, and contenting himself with some simple prescriptions, he withdrew. It was not until after passing, at various periods of the day, several hours in a similar examination, and even after beholding him while he slept, that he entered on the conversation with Valville which I am now about to relate. "If it has justly become a proverb," begun Scalpelli, "that we ought to conceal nothing from the doctor, in no case is it more just than where the delicate and difficult task is sought to be imposed on him of re-establishing violated order in the exercise of the intellectual functions. For in those cases, the disease that might have yielded to suitable treatment, may easily become incurable, if he have been deceived by false intelligence, and pursued a wrong course in attempting to remove it. Yet, obvious as is this truth, I have reason to believe that, in the

present case, you have concealed the true cause from me that has deprived your friend of his reason. You have told me of mighty reverses, of hopes of fortune suddenly quenched; now every symptom denotes, on the contrary, a violent and profound passion, one of those delirious attachments that absorb every faculty of the soul, and distract the whole existence. Do not imagine that I ground my judgment on simple conjectures. If the heart were not affected, if it were not the real seat of the evil, how happens it where there is no organic injury, and where the formation of the whole person is so perfect as it is in this young man, who might serve as a model for the sculptor—how comes it that the chest is so much oppressed? And why, in his slumbers more especially, do those deep and frequent sighs heave his bosom? On the other hand, observe his looks;

you do not find there any symptoms of the vague insipidity of ordinary fatuity, nor the fixed despair of insanity. Far from it: sometimes his eyes are turned to heaven with the most singular brilliancy of expression, he appears like one in an ecstasy of ravishment; and if those brief intervals are succeeded by severe agitation and convulsive movements, all that succession of feeling is easily and readily explained into the violent transports of jealousy, and the thirst of vengeance pushed even to phrensy."

Valville, who was struck with the justness of these remarks, replied, that had he had any knowledge of a passion, the consequences of which might be so fatal, he would not have failed to inform him of it; but that, if it existed at all, his friend had always carefully concealed it. He added, that at any rate it appeared strange to attribute exclusively to love an affec-

tion that had only seized La Cesia in quitting the office of the director of the police at Milan, whither he had gone on affairs of pure business. Scalpelli was not staggered in his opinion by this circumstance. What are termed by medical men the diagnostics, were too well marked to leave the slightest doubt.

"If I were informed," said he to Valville, "of all the circumstances connected with this unhappy event, I might discover the solution of an enigma which to you appears inexplicable. It is the more important to have that knowledge soon, as all remedies, all the resources of the healing art, however multiplied they may be now-a-days, are almost valueless in respect to this description of mental alienation; while, on the other hand, we frequently see such a malady yield at once to the influence of some fortunate change in our moral relations.

But how can I profit by a mode of cure to which chance alone can direct me, and which it is absolutely impossible to bring to the patient so long as I remain in complete ignorance of the antecedents of the disease? 'Tis your part, sir, to discover, either in his papers or by inquiries directed to those who have been intimate with him, or finally by calling your own recollections to your aid, some clue that may place me in the right road to success. In the mean time, I shall devote my attention to what I may term the physical part of the disease."

These arguments persuaded Valville; and he sought in consequence, by recalling all the various conversations that he had had with La Cesia, to discover some indications of an affection so violent and so miserable. His first thoughts led him towards the Countess Gradiska, of whom the count had often praised both

the beauty and the intelligence; but when he thought on the calm and uninterested air with which he spoke of her, he could not persuade himself that she was the object of a passion capable of producing such terrible effects. As a test, however, of his judgment, and with a view to relieve his doubts, he thought of pronouncing her name in the presence of the patient in one of his lucid intervals; but the absence of any thing like emotion when he did so, sufficiently proved that the cause of his alienation must be sought elsewhere. It was in vain he addressed himself to the banker of Milan, he had entirely lost sight of the count from the period of his departure from Vienna; and while they resided in that capital, he had never heard of any other connexion than that with the Countess Gradiska: a connexion which, as we said before, was so very public, that it was commonly believed

they were privately married. The indifferent success of these attempts did not discourage Valville: he wrote to his correspondents at Rome, at Naples, at Florence, in all of which towns La Cesia had for some time resided, earnestly requesting that the most minute inquiries should be made in respect of any intimacy that he might have contracted; and while he waited the result of these well-meant inquiries, he continued to lavish on him all the care that his condition could demand from the most tender, the most zealous, and active friendship. La Cesia had now been nearly a month at Como; and in spite of the talents and of the assiduous cares of the physician that attended on him, his condition was very little ameliorated. The violence of the febrile action had indeed in some degree diminished, but his reason continued notwithstanding habitually

confused; and if he now and then appeared to recover the use of it, those lucid intervals were of short duration, and they disappeared on the slightest opposition to his caprices. He was in one of those happy moments one day, at the time that Scalpelli was paying him his usual visit, when a servant from the house of the latter entering the room in great haste to say that he had come to require the assistance of the doctor for the Marquis Varèze, who had suffered from a paralytic attack.

At the name of Varèze, La Cesia uttered a shriek of terror, and convulsive shiverings shook the whole of his frame. The astonished doctor directing his searching eyes towards the patient, repeated the name—

"Yes, I am called to attend on the Marquis Varèze; do you know any thing about him?"

La Cesia opened his lips, as if to reply; but

suddenly covering his forehead with his two hands, he bent down his face, and remained sullenly silent. Valville, who was present at this scene, knew not how to explain it, for he was completely ignorant of the relation that had existed between the count and the family of the marquis, and he was lost in his conjecturing what it might be. The physician, however, promised that he should follow up this slight indication.

When Scalpelli got to Blevio, he found the condition of the marquis more troublesome than dangerous; and having prescribed for him accordingly, he was about to quit the mansion in order to return to Como, but on Thomasine's pressing him to remain, he consented at length to pass the night there. Preoccupied with what he had witnessed in the morning at Como, he could not avoid mentioning during the con-

versation that took place in the course of the evening the history of the young Frenchman who was under his care, his mental alienation, and the singularly violent emotion which the name of the Marquis Varèze pronounced by accident in his hearing had occasioned. He mentioned also that his name was Noirval—that he was a merchant; he described his singularly fine countenance; and added, that, according to the testimony of his friends, his mental qualities were not inferior to his external advantages.

Madame de Steinman, notwithstanding the overwhelming sorrow into which she had been plunged by her fatal marriage, was not the less feelingly alive to the misfortunes of others, and far from discontinuing her charitable habits, they formed now her only source of enjoyment. It was with compassionate interest, therefore, that

she listened to the tale of the physician when he added that he had every reason to believe that the real cause of the young man's malady was unhappily-placed affection, the ... similarity his case bore to her own brought involuntary tears to her eyes. She was however far from suspecting that she had any concern in it; for the name of Noirval, and the profession of French merchant, effectually concealed the mystery from her penetration.

On his return to Como, Scalpelli paid an immediate visit to the count. He found him in one of his calm intervals, although the traces of the agitation which he had experienced the day before had not entirely disappeared; and, as he was anxious to discover its cause, the doctor told him that he could now give him some news of the Marquis Varèze, in whom he appeared to be so much interested. The

mention of this name again affected the patient with a shivering fit; but he made no reply.

"The Marquis Varèze," continued Scalpelli, "of whom I am speaking to you, is he whose palace is situated at Blevio."

"Blevio!" exclaimed the unfortunate young man, in an accent of despair, while his haggard eyes expressed his terror.

"How happens it that Blevio inspires you with so much terror? It is one of the loveliest situations on the lake. I have some intention of conducting you thither, in order——."

"Me," replied La Cesia, eagerly, "to Blevio! me! Straight road to hell rather."

"What say you about hell?" replied Scalpelli. "Blevio is inhabited by an angel."

"An angel!" exclaimed La Cesia, wringing his hands; "a fallen angel—Thomasine!"

But the effort was too great for his strength;

he sunk back senseless; and slipping from the seat, rolled down on the floor. Scalpelli raised him up; and after administering such remedies as his case required, he went out in search of Valville, in order to make known the secret he had just discovered. That La Cesia was enamoured of the daughter of the Marquis of Varèze was abundantly evident; but when and where did this passion originate? Did it meet with a corresponding return? These were questions that it seemed impossible to answer. Meanwhile Valville, on recalling the whole of the circumstances which had preceded the interview that took place between his friend and Steinman, and the effect as sudden as it was deplorable which had resulted from it, began to imagine what was in reality the case, that he had only then for the first time learned the news of a union which destroyed all the

hopes he had been led to entertain; and on his side Scalpelli, who had taken a principal share in that unhappy marriage, a share which he would have blushed to avow, was now led to attribute the marked aversion that Thomasine had invariably displayed for the German officiary to a previous attachment, over which the heroic devotedness of her filial piety had enabled her to triumph. There was but one fact, though that was an important one, opposed to this hypothesis.

"I cannot possibly explain," said Scalpelli to Valville, "how a young person of so much sensibility should in such circumstances give not the slightest indication of emotion when I pronounced the name of Noirval in her hearing."

"Nothing however is more natural," replied Valville, smiling; "trust me, it would have

been very different had you mentioned the name of the Count de la Cesia, a Piedmontese nobleman whom political circumstances had forced to conceal himself under the name of the banker Noirval. The knowledge of this little circumstance being useless to my unfortunate friend, I concealed it from you, although I had the utmost reliance on your honour. But now let us haste, I conjure you, to take advantage of what a happy chance has enabled you to discover. Your state of ignorance, you were wont to say, paralysed all your efforts; now that obstacle is removed, I expect the happiest result from your talents: in so able hands the resources of art——."

"Truce to compliments," replied Scalpelli, shaking his head; "it is true that I did not expect, nor do I now expect, any great relief from the remedies that the medical art fur-

nishes, so long as the mental wound remains uncured; but even at present, when the nature of the latter is actually known, I foresee difficulties of more than one description which leave me but small hopes. However, I shall try all I can; you must second my efforts, and perhaps we may succeed in restoring to society one whom excellent qualities and high talents summon to the performance of an exalted character there.

The wishes expressed by Scalpelli were perfectly sincere. He was most ardently desirous of La Cesia's recovery, because, in the first place, such a cure would not fail to enhance his reputation as a man of science; and next, because he felt in this unhappy young man that lively interest, or rather sympathy, which binds one mind of higher order to another with something resembling the ties of kindred.

The opinion that he had formed of the intellectual faculties of La Cesia was not founded on what Valville had told him; for on examining his papers, in the hope of obtaining some information that might be employed beneficially in his cure, he had found several fragments of works which in an eminent degree proved his possession of an exquisite style, and of the yet rarer gift of thoughts both sublime and original. Before, however, he set about the means of cure, he thought it of importance to ascertain the actual sentiments of Thomasine; and with that view he returned to Blevio. On quitting the apartment of the marquis, his daughter, as was her ordinary practice, accompanied him out, in order to learn his precise opinion of the old man's condition, when Scalpelli pretended that he was in haste to return to Como.

"The critical situation," he said, "of the young man who is deprived of his reason, whose case I mentioned to you the other evening, requires all my care: and, by-the-bye, I ought to state that he is not, as I announced him then, a French merchant; I have since learned that he is a Piedmontese noble, and that his name is Jerome de la Cesia."

At the sound of that name the lost Thomasine felt so violent an emotion that, had she not been supported by Scalpelli, she would have fallen to the ground. He led her to a seat; and with a tone of strong interest went on—

"I am aware, madam, of the cause of the emotion that you display, and it is in vain to conceal it from me. But take confidence, I beseech you; far from betraying your secret, my only object, my most sincere wish, is to give back reason to an unfortunate gentleman,

who is well qualified to make the most noble use of the gift. But I must declare to you, with all the experience derived from long practice, that in such cases the resources of art are insufficient. Love alone can heal the wound which love inflicted. It was on learning too suddenly you were lost to him that despair overwhelmed his reason. Yet his delirium is not continuous; and if in one of those intervals when he enjoys the use of his rational faculties he were to learn that you had in abandoning him only followed the dictates of the most imperious duty, and though consigned by necessity to the arms of another, that yet your heart was not changed, I do not doubt that his cure might be effected."

Madame de Steinman took some time to recover her self-possession. At length she replied, that every tie which once connected her

with the person of whom he spoke was now irrevocably broken.

"Alas!" replied the doctor, "I see it; you cannot indeed subdue your affections to the dictates of your will, but you can regulate your conduct according to it. Leave then the sorrows of blasted affection a free course, and convert them into a healing balm, a source of salvation to him that once was, that still is dear to you——."

"No!" exclaimed Thomasine, interrupting him; "virtue, honour, every duty calls on me to consummate the sacrifice I have in part offered."

"Well, well," said the doctor sharply, "what severity of principle, pushed to excess, forbids to you, my duty, on the contrary, imposes on me." So saying he departed, leaving Thomasine in the deepest possible distress. Scalpelli was too

skilful an adept in that part of physiological science which is connected with a knowledge of the human heart, to believe that he could produce any very marked effect on the mental condition of his patient by limiting himself to the mere communication of what he had just learned; so deep a wound as that of La Cesia required more powerful and searching remedies; but before their adoption a good deal of management was absolutely necessary. He had observed that the accessions of the delirious fits which returned with nearly periodical regularity every week, were followed by a state of languor and sadness which disposed the patient to feelings of kindliness. In one of those intervals of calm he approached La Cesia, and taking his hand very affectionately, "Your sorrows," said he, "affect me very sensibly; but time and chance bring about the most

unexpected events, and in the meanwhile courage can support misfortune even in the weakest sex. I can never cease sufficiently to admire the resignation of the daughter of one of our lords, in a town in this neighbourhood, that I am in the habit of attending. She is as distinguished by her beauty as she is by her virtues; and she has renounced an alliance which would have completed her happiness, merely for the sake of sparing her father the horrors of a captivity which threatened to compromise his days."

The count gave some signs of emotion; but in a short time, curling his brow, he replied with bitterness—"When people are sinking under the burden of their own misfortunes, they have no tears to spare for those of strangers."

"Strangers!" exclaimed Scalpelli in a lively tone; "why no case that ever existed affects

you more intimately. She to whom I alluded is your dear friend Thomasine, who has never ceased to love you."

"Who said so?" cried the distracted count.

"She herself."

"Can it be so? But no—it is an illusion, a frightful dream, leading to a more frightful awakening. And, thou wretch," added he, his tone increasing in animation by degrees, "if thou deceivest me, thy life shall answer for the falsehood."

La Cesia finished the sentence with a menacing gesture of his hand, and his kindling eyes announced the approach of one of his fits of fury. The physician was not at all alarmed at it. He had been taught by Willis the almost magic art of attaining an irresistible ascendant over the insane, who even in their wildest wanderings still preserve a glimmering of reason.

It is necessary to have been a witness of such methods, in order to conceive the extent of an authority which is principally based in conduct invariably firm, benevolent, and just. The submission of the patient, which is as absolute as that of childhood to a parent, is in fact inspired by the same sentiment—a feeling of mental weakness and of inferiority of condition; it is a mixture of fear, attachment, and gratitude. Scalpelli, in the present circumstances, had no need, for the purpose of repressing the violence of the count, of any other means than one of his severe looks—"I am anxious for your welfare," said he, "and I shall pursue it; but calm these fits of passion, which only augment your sickness, or else the strait-waistcoat shall reply to you." As he pronounced these words with a firm voice, he pointed with

his finger to that dreaded instrument of punishment which is the terror of the insane.

La Cesia shuddered in every limb; and in a short time falling back on his chair, he covered his eyes with his hands, and sunk into obstinate silence. Scalpelli then retired. What he had just witnessed, and what he had learned at Blevio, convinced him that the count would infallibly recover the use of his reason were he once assured of the truth that his mistress had never betrayed him; but then it was she, and she only, that could assure him of this; and how was the decided explanation to take place? The pride and obstinate resentment of La Cesia did not appear to Scalpelli more insurmountable than the virtuous reserve of Thomasine. He concluded, therefore, that the meeting of the two lovers could not be brought

about but by means independent of their will, and he resolved to employ for that purpose all the resources of his wit and perseverance of his character.

CHAPTER XII.

SCALPELLI, in examining successively into every department of the *Materia Medica*, had given his particular attention to poisonous substances; and his researches had not been directed solely from a wish to combat their deleterious qualities, he had pursued them with a higher view. Impressed by the energy with which they acted on the human frame, he had repeatedly put the question to himself, whether by modifying them they might not be made to

contribute to some useful purpose. With this view, and guided by the lights of modern chymistry, by analysing carefully the most deadly poisons, by trying on his own person the most hazardous experiments, he feared not to grope in that arsenal where nature has laid up her instruments of death in order to discover some article of offensive armour against their attacks; an undertaking less brilliant, but not less bold than that of the learned doctor who first dared to draw down from the clouds the growling thunder, and to exhibit it at his feet powerless and disarmed. In vain is it that misanthropic chagrin persists in undervaluing the dignity of man, by presenting to our contemplation nothing but a picture of his vices and his errors; the chief of creation bursts forth in all his native dignity when such marks of genius recall his divine origin.

The physician of Como had been greatly successful in the dangerous career into which his love of science had led him. The institute of Bologna had recompensed his zeal and its results by an honourable testimony, by inserting in its acts his Dissertation upon Opium, which was full of ideas as novel as they were ingenious. Subsequent to that time he had pursued his researches respecting the action of that medicine, so commonly used, and yet so uncertain in its effects; and he had succeeded in extracting from it the principle to which alone it owes its astonishing power of laying the senses to slumber, and of holding life itself, as it were, suspended.* Passing next to the

* This principle, which is now known in the pharmacopœias under the name of *narcotine*, differs essentially from *morphine*, a poison equally terrible and violent, long celebrated in the annals of crime.

application of this principle, he composed from it a potion at once soothing and somnific, the secret of which he kept to himself; and this medicine, the dose of which he regulated according to the age and strength of the patient, and the effect that he wished to produce, at the same time that it produced the deepest slumber, acted with such absolute certainty, that he could within an hour predict the termination of the slumber that it occasioned.

He had used it advantageously in the beginning of his treatment of La Cesia's case; and it was by means of it that he had frequently procured for him a refreshing sleep after his most violent fits. Now, however, he was desirous to resort to it not as a means of cure, but in despair of prevailing on the count to accompany him to Blevio when he went thither; he saw no other expedient of procuring for him an interview

which he deemed essential to his recovery, but to carry him thither without his knowledge. He communicated this project to Valville, who approved of it; and they began accordingly to make the preparations requisite for carrying it into prompt execution. This was not, however, enough. Obstacles of a more insurmountable character were to be got over in respect of Thomasine. Scalpelli was not ignorant of these, but neither was he discouraged by them. It is the peculiarity of a mind fertile in resources to take advantage of circumstances which appear absolutely foreign to the purpose they propose to gain. It was thus that the malady of the Marquis of Varèze furnished Scalpelli with an opportunity of succeeding in his object. There was, it is true, no longer any fears of his life; but the palsy, which deprived him of the use of a part of his limbs,

refused to yield to ordinary remedies; and Scalpelli, without being cast down, determined to have recourse to others more efficacious. He kept up a constant correspondence with some of the most able practitioners in Vienna, Paris, and Edinburgh; he was in the habit, moreover, of consulting the numerous periodicals, which serve, if we may so express it, as a sort of telegraphs to the scientific world, and render available to all in common the inexhaustible treasure of observation, of experience, and of discovery, that is receiving continual augmentation from the labours of genius. Thanks to the rapidity with which such communications now travel, the light of learning, like that of the sun, enlightens all nations by one and the same ray.

Scalpelli had been repeatedly struck with the great advantages that recent mechanical

[illegible] to de- [illegible] used [illegible] among the students [illegible] He [illegible] to Turmisire to [illegible] and the deed being eagerly [illegible] directions to a skilful [illegible] to prepare the necessary [illegible] he was informed he had [illegible] and having [illegible] La Cesa to take a dose [illegible] which immediately [illegible] the wished-for effect, by the aid of [illegible] and Kirche had him placed in the [illegible] daylight was hardly yet peeping [illegible] at Bievlo. Under favour of [illegible] of the morning he was carefully [illegible] and deposited in an apartment in the ground-floor in the Palace Vareze, which

was prepared for the reception of the bathing machine; and where a large bathing-vessel, and a sofa surrounded by screens, had been placed, in order to enable the marquis to partake of them. The count, wrapped carefully in his cloak, and profoundly sleeping, was cautiously placed on the couch. Thomasine, who always rose with the sun, being informed of the arrival of the doctor, immediately went to join him, in order that she might inform him in what state the marquis her father was, and consult with him in respect of the mode of treatment that was in future to be followed. As she entered into the room, he advanced a few steps to meet her, and addressing her—"Madam," said he, "every thing is ready; the workmen from Como have exactly fulfilled my instructions, and I have every reason to suppose that the marquis will receive the most signal advan-

tage from the trial we are about to enter on. But, madam, there is another patient in whom I take a lively interest, and whose condition demands all my care. The young man of whom I spoke to you——"

Thomasine, blushing deeply, here interrupted Scalpelli, by saying that she did not wish him to speak to her on any other subject but that of her father.

"In truth," returned he, with a tone of strong feeling, "if I address myself to you, it is only because I have already exhausted all the resources of my art, and because you only of all human beings can give back to him that reason, which is a more precious possession than life itself."

"No, I can do nothing—my duty—Heaven that now hears me——."

"Heaven, above all duties, prescribes that of

humanity; and believe me that I respect you much too highly to ask you to do aught contrary to your duty. My intentions are pure.—But moments are precious. There, behind that screen, on the couch that has been prepared for your father, the man whom you once loved so well awaits his judgment at your hands. But you totter; lean on my arm, and endeavour to be calm. He hears us not, he is plunged in an almost lethargic slumber; and he has been carried to the palace without even his being conscious of it."

"What would you have me do? What can I do to save him?"

The physician looked at his watch.

"In a few minutes," said he, "sleep will leave him. All that I ask of you, and you surely cannot refuse it, is to tell him who received your earliest pledges of affection; that

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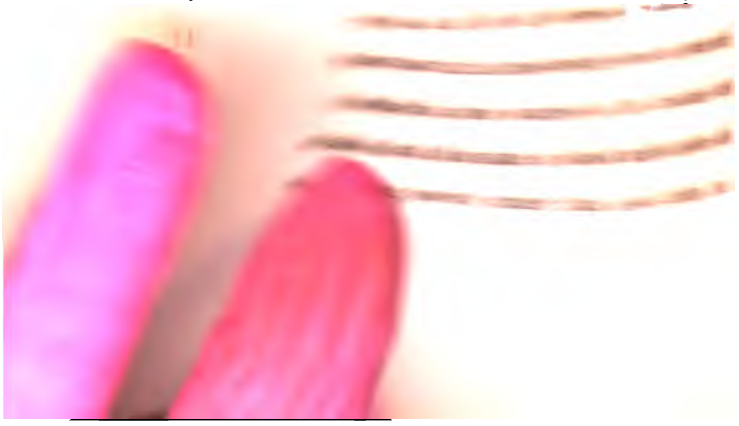

approaching him, said in an affectionate tone—"My friend, we are at Blevio, and Thomasine Vanini is actually before you. It was my desire, it was in fact absolutely essential to your repose and to hers, that she herself should inform you of the motives of her conduct.

"Speak, madam," he added, "from so pure lips nothing but truth can issue."

"Ah, what can I say?" replied Thomasine, melting into tears; "doctor, you crush my very soul."

"At last, then," exclaimed La Cesia, gathering animation by degrees, "through the strange obscurity that surrounds me, I begin to perceive the cause of my misfortunes. It was that wretched old man, it was thy father, Thomasine, that sacrificed thee. But let him tremble;

even my contempt of his weakness shall not save him from my vengeance."

In pronouncing these words his gestures were so terrible, that the distracted Thomasine could not avoid casting herself at his knees and crying out—"Mercy, mercy, for my father! —on me, on me alone, let the burden of your vengeance fall—I alone am guilty. Alas! his liberty and his life were threatened. I sacrificed myself; but, far from advising the offering I made, he long and urgently resisted it. I call Scalpelli to testify the truth of what I say."

"It is most true," replied Scalpelli, looking down; for this unexpected appeal, by recalling the memory of the crime he had committed, made him feel the dart of remorse because of it: in seeking, however, to conceal his con-

fusion, he added, with a tone of authority which his profession entitled him to use—"This interview must not be prolonged; it might otherwise be attended with fatal consequences. Retire, madam; fear nothing for your father; I answer for his safety." Then turning to La Cesia, and taking advantage of the ascendancy he had gained over him, he took him by the arm and led him out, saying in a firm tone—

"This is enough for the first time—you shall see each other again."

The young man followed him without struggle. He had recovered his reason, but his head was feeble, and he felt it to be so; and there was a confusion in his ideas that rendered him sensible of his need of assistance. Even under these circumstances, however, the pride of his character was not undiscernible in the expression of his countenance. But like the

enormous lion which the famous Hassan Pacha was wont to lead about with him, he was not the less docile and obedient to him that had subdued him.

CHAPTER XIII.

When La Cesia had once more reached Como, he was in a state of mind that it would be difficult to describe; so many confused and even opposite ideas, crossed and jostled each other in his burning brain. Yet, as Scalpelli had foreseen, his mental condition was changed decidedly for the better from the moment that he received proof positive that she whom he adored had sacrificed herself to the good of her father, although his affections remained un-

changed. The preference supposed to have been gained over him by an unworthy rival, a most humiliating thought which had very much aggravated his disease, no longer wounded his pride; but, on the other hand, the generous devotedness of Thomasine, and the fresh proof she had given of her nobleness of soul, made him feel but the more deeply the greatness of the loss he had sustained. The physician marked with extreme uneasiness the agitation that was produced by these varying emotions; for he was aware that above all things calm was necessary to consolidate the cure of so deep and so painful a wound. But in vain had he offered any subject of amusement to a man so deeply impassioned; it was impossible to hope to produce any impression on him, but by exhibiting to him some hope in the future to compensate for the sorrows of the past. Scalpelli, therefore, on enter-

ing into a serious discussion with him, endeavoured to show that any contract founded on a consent extorted by violence or procured by fraud, was in its nature essentially null and void. Human laws and divine laws were at one on this point; and marriage, the most holy of contracts, was of course comprehended under the general rule. "A day will doubtless arrive," said he, "and it is not far distant, when this mystery of iniquity will be unsealed, and when a legal dissolution will put an end to this ill-assorted match. In fact," continued Scalpelli, "in love there are no irremediable evils but death or inconstancy; but above all things you must get into such a state of health as to be capable of taking advantage of opportunity, if any should occur, or rather of producing it if it do not. You must recover the perfect use of your wonted energy, and of all

your faculties. Happily from this day your recovery depends on yourself alone. Drive far from your mind all subjects of irritation; follow, without for a moment departing from it, the mild and simple regimen that I shall prescribe for you, and your recovery will very soon be complete. In the mean time we lose no time. You see with what confidence I am treated in the Varèze family—I will look to your interests there."

These counsels were sage; and the count, who now enjoyed the use of reason, though his faculties were in too weak a condition to be capable of sustaining continuous application, perceived that they were so. He promised to follow them; and affected by the tender care that his physician lavished on him, he accepted his offers of service with due gratitude.

When we recollect the character played by

Scalpelli in the beginning of this unhappy affair, his intentions will appear more than suspicious; and it is but natural that the reader should anticipate some fresh instance of perfidy. He will however judge unjustly of the doctor, whose protestations were on this occasion really sincere; and who, as the event proved, was most honestly anxious to repair in some way the wrongs he had committed against the desolate family. But to what must we attribute so sudden a change? Had virtue, by a sort of *coup de main*, gained a victory over the vicious propensities of his nature? The thought would be a consolatory one; but truth forbids its indulgence. Unquestionably repentance had more than once made Scalpelli feel her barbed dart in his guilty heart; but alas! remorse is common, but reformation is rare; and we feel compelled to declare that

his return to justice was not the result either of pure or disinterested feelings. Base cupidity had impelled him to commit the wrong; and a passion not more honourable impelled him to attempt its remedy—the passion of revenge.

No one ever learned or ever will, the exact details of the transactions between Scalpelli and Steinman, in respect of the payment promised by the latter in consideration of the physician's detestable manœuvring. All that is certainly known is, that the bill to order was never completely discharged; that an extension of the period for the payment of the remainder was asked and granted; and that when the deferred period arrived the director-general of the police took advantage of certain inconsiderate expressions of Scalpelli respecting the government, and replied to his request of payment by a threat, if he persisted in it,

of an information and a prosecution for high treason.

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Indignant at such dishonesty, but compelled notwithstanding to conceal his resentment, the Comasse doctor swore he would be revenged; and he failed not to seize the opportunity that fortune presented to him of troubling for ever a union on which his enemy had rested his hopes of fortune and happiness. In acting thus he did not alone satiate his vindictive character; he felt besides a pleasure in serving a young man to whose misfortunes he had so much contributed, and who had now inspired him with a real affection. He became attached to him in the first instance, as ordinarily happens, from the attentions that he had paid to his case; and besides this there had grown up between the two young men that species of sympathy which intimate union never

fails to produce between two minds of a superior order, that sort of mutual kindness which cannot be better described than by its assimilation to what is felt by natives of the same town when they meet on a foreign strand.

Scalpelli, meanwhile, was impatiently expected at Blevio, and he made haste to return thither. He found the malady of the marquis no worse, but he found the health of his daughter seriously affected. The unexpected appearance of him whom she had so devotedly loved, and whom, without being able to resist it, she still adored in her heart, had occasioned her a shock, which in her delicate condition might be attended with serious consequences. A violent fever made its appearance that very night, and for several days great fear was entertained of a miscarriage. The strength of her constitution, however, prevailed, and a few

weeks of repose gave her back her health, which had been so severely shaken. Hitherto she had regularly avoided speaking to Scalpelli on the subject of the events that took place in the bathing-room; but one day after her recovery, when she happened to be alone with him, she presented to him a sealed letter, which she requested him not to open until he reached Como. As this letter had great influence over the events that followed its delivery, we shall copy it here.

MADAME DE STEINMAN TO DR. SCALPELLI.

Blevio, 16th October, 1821.

Sir,

Extraordinary circumstances, connected with the exercise of your profession, have given you an opportunity of learning certain secrets that

you are well aware, could the relinquishment of my fortune have saved him, it would have been cheerfully made. He is generous in his nature, and will not fail to appreciate my motives. Had he been situated as I was, would he have done less? Let him pity me, but let him not, I entreat, seek to aggravate my distress by attempting to reunite a band which is torn asunder for ever. The confusion into which his unexpected appearance threw me may well excuse any symptoms that I may have betrayed of my former sentiments, but my determination to break off every connexion with him is not the less irrevocable. Yours, eternally obliged,

THOMASINE DE STEINMAN.

The perusal of this letter enlightened Scalpelli; he knew that Thomasine was pure and virtuous, and that nothing would prevail on

her to abandon the line of her duty; but he had not imagined that while so indulgent to others she would push her principles to such scrupulous rigidity. He was especially struck by the character of irrevocability that appeared in this determinate declaration to cease from all communication with the man whom she loved. It was now evident that she would never consent to the steps which they might have been tempted to take with the civil and religious authorities of the country in order to procure a dissolution of her marriage, and that any attempt of the kind must prove altogether chimerical. In fact, the doctor, in holding out to La Cesia that flattering prospect, had made use of the privilege of people of his profession, who must frequently give assurance of hope to their patients, and inspire them with a confidence in which they themselves do not at

all participate; nor are they wrong in this; for experience has proved that such illusions are not among the least efficacious of their remedies. In the present case the success that followed had justified the attempt of the surgeon; and the state of the count's health was so satisfactory that all fears of a relapse were visionary. Sometimes, it is true, after violent mental struggles, he experienced pains in his head, and even a degree of confusion in his ideas, but the open air and gentle exercise soon sufficed to dissipate those momentary symptoms of recurring malady; which left behind them no deeper traces than do those light clouds which in the tail of the storm are often seen hurrying over the disk of the sun, but without darkening or troubling the brilliancy and serenity of the atmosphere. The nicety of management which his weakness

demanded being no longer required, Scalpelli did not hesitate to inform him of Thomasine's resolution: although seeking at the same time to soften as much as possible the painfulness of the communication, he commenced it by an assurance that the heart of his former mistress was still the same; that she loved as deeply as ever she had done; and groaned in secret over the sacrifice that she had imposed on herself, at the moment even when an idea, perhaps exaggerated, of her new duties, led her to regard as indissoluble the ties that she had contracted. At last, however, he was compelled to allow the truth to escape, and to state frankly that Thomasine had made up her mind to break with him for ever. This bad news affected La Cesia very deeply, although he still retained some hope of overcoming her resolution. "It was rare," he

said, "that such determinations turned out irrevocable; and he would still try what another interview might effect."

"I am much afraid," said the physician, shaking his head, "that your efforts will be made in vain. But," he added, presenting to him the letter which we have just copied for our readers, "you may yourself judge of her disposition. Here is what she writes to me, unquestionably for the purpose of its being shown to you."

La Cesia eagerly seized the writing. Whilst he was running his eye over it he checked any emotions he felt; but when he turned the page, and when the signature met his view, "Thomasine de Steinman!" exclaimed he in a fury, and tearing with his teeth the name of his hated rival, and foaming with rage, he spit the fragments from him. His whole body was

agitated with convulsive trembling; his cheeks grew palid, his lips livid and quivering, and incapable of uttering but half-formed sounds. These symptoms of anger inflamed to excess did not alarm Scalpelli, who with great satisfaction perceived that his head remained unaffected by the paroxysm; he was not however the less anxious to calm the transport down, and to direct his ideas into other channels. He represented to him, therefore, that the critical position in which political events had then placed him, as well as the dictates of ordinary prudence imperiously demanded, that he should remove from a spot where he ran every moment the risk of being denounced and arrested.

"In quitting this neighbourhood," said he, "you carry at least along with you the certainty so consoling to a mind at once proud

and affectionate, that you are still tenderly beloved. It is impossible you should doubt that your sorrows, however severe, are at least participated; and your misfortunes after all are attributable not to the caprice but to the virtues—."

"Virtues!" exclaimed La Cesia, in a tone of indignant disdain; "high-sounding and meaningless term! Know, sir, that if I despise meanness and vice, it is not because I estimate highly what men call virtue. No, no! in this world of misery and of folly, I recognise nothing as equitable but the retributive part of the system. 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' such has always been, such shall ever be, my virtue. The forgiveness of injuries, that pretended generosity, is at bottom nought but weakness and cowardice."

This erroneous doctrine, which is but too

safety.—Forget not that you have an object to effect—."

"I In fact I have an object, an important one," said La Cesia, interrupting him, "one with which my very existence is mixed up. Leave me to think of——." In uttering these words, he quitted the doctor abruptly, and abandoning the house, he took the path that led towards the mountain, and was speedily out of sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

La Cesia, when he had reached the summit of the hill, sat down on the point of a rock where he had a clear view of the western branch of the Lake of Como, and gave a free course to the various thoughts that agitated his mind. There was one feeling predominated over all the rest, and that feeling was an unextinguishable thirst of revenge, a terrible passion, which, when carried to such excess, assumes the character of actual phrensy, of which the old inhabitants of the north witness few examples. He had

felt the access of this passion from the moment of his interview with Steinman; and the consequences would have been fatal to the one or to the other, or both, had it not been for the long attack of delirium, which deprived him of the power of executing his dark projects. From the period that he had recovered his reason, the hopes with which the physician had flattered him, and perhaps also the remains of his physical as well as mental weakness, had deadened the violence of his resentment, but the letter of Thomasine to Scalpelli restored it to all its energy. The most astonishing effect, however, that this fatal letter produced on the mind of the count, was a total change, or rather a sudden revolution in his affections. His love for the daughter of the Marquis Varèze, that ardent love which appeared to be essential to his existence, was in an instant extinguished. When for the purpose of saving her father Thomasine sacrificed herself to an unworthy rival, the keen anguish which he felt did not in any degree diminish his tenderness. Her conduct was justified by filial duty, and he recognised in her the

victim of a moral force, for whose effects she was not to be called to account, any more than if by physical violence she had been carried off by the chief of a band of robbers. But when she declared that she would break for ever all those ties that he had hitherto looked on as sacred; and when she renounced, independent of his participation in her renunciation, their reciprocal engagements; she committed in his eyes a breach of faith, an act of perfidy, that admitted of no excuse. The reproach thus offered to Thomasine was most unjust. It was evident that her sensitive conscience had imposed on her another sacrifice, and that in obeying its dictates she was fulfilling with regret a painful duty; but his irritated pride would not admit of reasoning; his imperious character could not form an idea of affection, without attaching to it the right of domineering in the person that loved. By such tempers, every attempt on the part of the beloved object to withdraw itself from the dependence to which it has been subjected, is regarded as an act of rebellion which justifies an abandonment of all concern about it.

As La Cesia was thenceforth restrained by no

tie, he studied thenceforth no object but the indulgence of the spirit of revenge which actuated him. He was determined on rendering it if possible complete and memorable; and he exhausted his fertile imagination in inventing means of accumulating sorrow and suffering on the devoted head of his enemy.

Whilst he was thus absorbed in these sombre thoughts, he could not keep from repeating, almost mechanically, the kind of terrible burden which he had before uttered in coming from Steinman's office at Milan,—"Death is too little for him."

In fact, so far from any attempt on his life, he would have exposed his own in order to preserve him from instant danger, lest he should escape from the long and lingering death which he proposed to inflict upon him. All of a sudden he started up, and as if struck with sudden inspiration, like the famous mathematician of Syracuse,—

"I have it," he exclaimed; "I have it—the solution of this problem of misfortune. He shall suffer at one and the same time in every thing he holds dear! She whom he dares to call wife, and

who is about to make him a father, shall be snatched by violence from him. He shall know that she is in the power of a rival, and that rival a favoured one; and the uncertainty of the fate that awaits her as well as her offspring shall add to his grief the torment of perplexity. I shall do yet more, I shall make known his infamous conduct to the government which he serves, that he may lose at one and the same moment, honour and fortune and peace."

In pronouncing this anathema, which he bound himself to effect by a solemn and dreadful oath, his eyes shot forth that sinistrous light, and his cheek glowed with that warmth, and his smile exhibited that ferocity of joy, which are ordinarily given to the prince of darkness when he is described as gloating over the reprobates whom he has dragged down to the abyss, and rejoicing at the success of the plots by which their ruin has been completed.

The resolution which he had thus adopted being irrevocably formed, La Cesia hastened to descend from the mountain. When he arrived at his lodgings he shut himself up in his chamber,

in order that he might examine in detail the particulars of the plan that he had conceived; and which, although imposed by a passion that was as insane as chimerical in its appearance, was nevertheless no suggestion of a delirious imagination, for he had not adopted it until he had carefully weighed the means of accomplishing it. Unquestionably the difficulties were not small, but they were not insurmountable; and Cesia was one of those men of ten thousand, whose talents and energy obstacles only serve to sharpen and augment. He in this respect resembled that mighty conqueror, whom we beheld for such a length of years making nations and kings to tremble; ever and anon producing some grand plan or other, which at first appearance bore every mark of headlong rashness, but which was pursued with so much rapidity and so much wisdom, that its issues were victory and safety. Boundless and adventurous as was his mind, he yet contrived always to balance the audacity of his designs by the admirable prudence of his preparative steps; nor was he ever so dazzled by their greatness as

to neglect the slightest chance of ensuring their success.

The count was not indeed like Napoleon at the head of the forces of a great empire, nor had he Europe for his antagonist; but genius is not to be measured by the greatness of its objects, nor the importance of its results; it is to be estimated by a comparison of the means which it has to employ, and the difficulties which it has to overcome.

Let us examine those that opposed the plans which La Cesia meditated. The point at which he aimed was no less than to carry off a young married lady, who was surrounded by her family and by numerous domestics, and that against her inclination. Neither was there the least chance of surprising her without the palace of her father, for since his last sickness she hardly ever quitted his apartment. But even granting this hazardous attempt to be crowned with success, what probability was there of his passing a frontier guarded by detachments of troops of the line, and of customhouse officers, without being perceived and intercepted? This was at all times a matter of

extreme difficulty; but the difficulty must necessarily be greatly increased when the director-general of the police was personally interested in preventing his passage. How could he hope to escape from the sharpened vigilance of the numerous agents, who would not fail to hurry from every point to intercept the ravisher? Lastly, admitting every thing to succeed as he wished, he must find in a foreign land an asylum impenetrable to every eye; since it was not at all to be doubted that requisitions accompanied with minute descriptions of the parties would be sent to all the neighbouring governments; and that in case of discovery, their arrest and their delivery to justice would not once be questioned. But whatever difficulties the abduction of Thomasine might under such circumstances present to his contemplation, La Cesia, by his numerous precautions and arrangements, of which we shall speak by-and-by, had but one concern, and that was the place of his retreat when it was effected. At one time he thought of the mountains of the Tesino, where at a previous period of our history it will be remembered he took up his abode. This territory was at

a distance from society, and almost savage; and he felt persuaded that in a rude shealing, surrounded by almost inaccessible rocks, an eagle's flight above the level of the plain, and under the protection of vigilant and trusty friends, his prey would be secure. But a very little reflection induced him to abandon all thought of that place. The district of Mendreses was but a few leagues from the lake of Como, and the emissaries of Steinman had only to discover the very first traces of his route in order to place him in danger. He might, indeed, remove from the frontier and plunge into the interior of Switzerland, but then he knew no one there to whose assistance he could have recourse in case of need, whilst in France he had a tried friend, and she was at the head of a powerful party. Besides, a great nation has this important advantage, that it is more easy to remain concealed among and confounded with its crowded population, than to dwell unknown in the midst of one that is thinly scattered, and where strangers naturally attract attention.

La Cesia reckoned on the friendship of the Countess Gradiska, for he knew that she was as

active as obliging; and the recent service she had done him without asking it, was a fresh proof that the name of brother and sister, which they had given to each other for several years, were not mere sounds, but the sincere expression of their mutual sentiments. He wrote to her to say that he meant to visit Paris as soon as he could do so in safety; but that his situation, which was then more critical than ever, compelled him to cast over the place of his residence an impenetrable veil; and therefore he entreated her to procure for him in the country, and at a distance from the capital, some asylum where he might be secret and secure. He did not deem it prudent to say any thing of his ulterior designs, a reserve which the mode of his correspondence, which was by post, seemed to authorise. Whilst waiting for the countess's answer, he busied himself in preparations for his hazardous journey. If the obstacles he had to surmount were great, he had powerful auxiliaries to aid him in surmounting them: in the first place, a courageous heart, proof to every trial; in the second, an intellect of superior order; and last, not least, a well-filled purse. When these

three are combined, they are all but omnipotent; for the power that chance, under the name of fortune, exercises over events, is much more limited than people are apt generally to imagine.

As he contemplated the employment of violence, it was necessary to procure a few of those bold determined fellows without creed or heart, habituated to despise custom and make light of law, and who were ready to expose their lives to hazard wherever the paltry lure of money was held out to them. Notwithstanding the boasted progress of the march of intellect, there is no state in Europe that does not harbour a great number of such dangerous subjects; and while the perversity of human nature remains so strong as it is, it is as hopeless to expect that society will ever be purged from their presence, as to expect that the earth will ever be cleared of every noxious animal and insect that infest it. It is not less, however, the duty of every government to be unsparing in their efforts to diminish an evil which it is impossible to eradicate; and yet, sorry are we to say it, in almost every country a conduct precisely opposed to this is observed.

It was thus that in the Lombardo-Venetian government the prohibition of a vast number of articles of manufacture, to the use of which the entire population had been long habituated, and of which no prohibition could induce them to deprive themselves, had generated a host of smugglers, who occupied the southern declivities of the Alps, from the western extremity of the Tyrol as far as the confines of the Vaudois, with almost military strictness. These modern freebooters, who are a brave and active set of men, are divided into distinct bands; all of them ready to assist each other, and led on by intelligent and experienced chiefs. Ever at open war with the customhouse officers, they not unfrequently exchange a shot with them, but more ordinarily they proceed by negociation; and whole convoys of prohibited goods pass freely on payment of a stipulated sum. This contraband commerce is far from inconsiderable; it employs annually a capital of several millions; and these speculations return such great profits, that there is hardly a town in which entrepots may not be found filled with the fabrics of England, of France, and Switzer-

land. In fact, the only party that is a loser in this way is the Austrian government, which is so very ill-advised, as to entertain at a vast expense a legion of officers employed in attempts to keep up a prohibition that exists only in name, whilst it might, were it content to limit its views to the exaction of moderate duties wisely imposed on the compound rates of the bulk and value of the articles imported, derive from them a large and steady revenue.

In fact, with all the attempted precautions, so little is the contraband trade watched over, or rather so habitually is it connived at, that the merchants engaged in it make hardly any mystery of their traffic. It was, therefore, no difficult matter for La Cesia to get access by means of Valville, who happened to have some business with his house, to one of those worthies. La Cesia was represented as a banker of Lyons who had some funds compromised by the partial failure of a manufacturer at St. Gall; the latter, it was pretended, had offered a large quantity of muslin and of calicoes at prime cost in liquidation of his debt; but these articles being a drug in the

market, in consequence of the crisis that commerce had been exposed to in both worlds, it was found impossible to effect sales on the spot without incurring an immense loss; whereas, by introducing them in an underhand way into Austro-Italy, it was not unreasonable to look for a considerable profit, that is to say, if the cost of insurance and of carriage were not too high.

The merchant of Como replied to these overtures, that circumstances were not favourable to such speculations—that the old inspector of customs, who had been blamed by government for his negligence, which perhaps was not very disinterested, had just been succeeded by a young fellow of great activity, whose vigilance had diffused a general uneasiness among all those who were concerned in smuggling transactions—that, in fact, so very little business that way had been effected for several weeks, that the premium of insurance was not even fixed. Under such circumstances, he advised La Cesia to direct his views to another part of the frontier. "It is alleged," said he, "that the issues of the Grisons are not so strictly watched as they used to be;

and as I am a little interested in that quarter, I have sent one of my principal agents thither—a fellow who has both pluck and arm: I'll tell you what he says of it as soon as he returns."

"I am pressed for time," replied the count, "and must adopt some resolution or other immediately; I should therefore like to examine the facilities you speak of in person, as well as the amount of risk that I must incur. Be then so good as to let me have a note of introduction to your confidential agent; I shall call on you when I come back, and then perhaps we may bargain together."

The note was accordingly written; and the very next morning La Cesia set out for the village of N. on the route of Coire. It was there that the chief of the smugglers in that quarter had taken up his temporary residence for the purpose of exploring the country.

In delivering his credentials, La Cesia was particularly struck by the distinguished manners of the man to whom they were addressed. He was a man in the vigour of his age, tall, and with well-knitted joints; his eye quick, his regard keen; and

it might be easily perceived from the ease and freedom of his step that he had been a soldier.

"The object of my journey," said the count to him politely, "is to receive precise information of the state of the frontier. I wish to know if the watch kept up is a strict one. Have we, for instance, if unprovided with passports, to quit the grand route, and to take to by-ways in order to pass the barriers? And if so compelled, must we go on foot, and how long? Are the customhouse officers fellows that you could treat with? And, lastly, if we were inclined to force a passage, would the attempt be accompanied with much risk?"

Antonio, which was the travelling name of the captain of the smugglers, replied, that he had been too short a time in the country to give a positive answer to all these inquiries; but that he reckoned, along with a couple of companions, on making a survey next day through the mountains, and that he should then see how the land lay.

"I shall go with you, if you have no objection," said La Cesia, who was delighted at the prospect of an excursion in company with an individual whose appearance bespoke a man of education and

of cultivated mind. Nor did his appearance belie him; for during the two days that they passed together, an intimacy, naturally springing out of similarity of character and of profession, did not fail to be established between them. When they were on their return to the village of N. the count, who was anxious to enter into yet stricter ties of connexion with a person whom he hoped to associate in his projects, expressed to his new friend the surprise he not unnaturally felt at finding him in a situation so inferior to what he had a right to expect from fortune; a situation in which the gains were precarious and scanty, the labour without intermission, and the danger without honour.

"I shall respond to the interest that you testify for my welfare," said Antonio, "by frankly confiding my history to your keeping. It is a very plain one, and would figure but poorly in the pages of a romance. I was born in the Valteline, and of consequence I am a Swiss by nation, although since the glorious congress of Vienna I have become a subject of Austria. My family is noble, and my relations have always served in the

troops of the canton that were in the pay of France. Such also was my destination; but my father, who was an officer in the Swiss guards, having been massacred on the famous 10th of August, my mother, out of hatred of the revolution by which she had suffered so much, made me enter as a cadet into the imperial regiment of Belgioioso. I made five campaigns with that corps; and in the course of the fifth, and last, I received a rather severe wound, which purchased me the cross of Maria Theresa, and the promise of a sub-lieutenant's commission. I was on the very eve of obtaining it when I somehow fell out with our aid-major. The fellow was a German, a soldier of fortune, whose natural rudeness degenerated when he was drunk to sheer brutality. He made a real German quarrel with me; and in the course of it indulged in terms so very offensive, that I had no way of silencing him but knocking him down. I was quite ready to give him every satisfaction, but he preferred a complaint, and had me cashiered. This rigorous chastisement of a fault, which the extreme provocation I had received rendered quite excusable, and the deprivation of a rank which I had acquired

by honourable service, and at the price of my blood, excited my indignation to the highest degree. I swore eternal hatred to the government of Austria, and instantly quitted the cantonments where we then lay, with a view to pass over to America and join the bands fighting under Bolivar, and follow the destiny of that second Washington of the new world. I was crossing over the Alps, in order to bid a last good-bye to my mother, when, clambering up St. Gothard, I accidentally met with one of my fellow-countrymen who was travelling for a commercial house. The persons who employed him carried on an extensive contraband traffic with Lombardy: he prevailed on me to go with him to Como; and there he introduced me to the merchant whose letter you brought with you, and he and I soon came to a mutual understanding. After taking the management of two or three hazardous expeditions, from which I extricated myself successfully, he confided to me the command of a squad of twenty fellows, mostly deserted soldiers, with which for these two years past I have scoured the frontiers of Milan and Piedmont. Far from repining at my lot, I find

it much more agreeable than the one I have left; and every day I see fresh reason for congratulating myself on the change. In the first place, I have no reason to fear injustice or violation of right here. If I have a good deal of labour to undergo—if I have some dangers to brave, at least I make war for my own interest and that of my allies, and not in order to serve the ends of a prince whom, from the moment that by a monstrous abuse of power he subjugated my country to his yoke, I have not ceased to detest. In a word, I am the commander of a set of brave, intelligent fellows, who are to a man devoted to my service."

"In fact," replied La Cesia, "I could not but observe during our excursion the eagerness of the men that accompanied you to get you out of that difficult place, in which we thought we should have to remain."

"They are all equally attached to me; nothing indeed but justice and firmness, with the exercise of a little kindness, is requisite to gain the affections of those that are dependent on us. My volunteers are as punctual in their service as

the troops of the line, and they have moreover a zeal——."

"You dispose of them as you please, of consequence.—If, for instance, you called on them to escort, say, instead of a few bales of merchandise, a few persons who had an interest in passing the frontier without being observed, it would be all the same to them?"

"Unquestionably—the risk is the same."

"And if one were to double the remuneration that they are in the habit of receiving for such expeditions?"

"Mr. Banker," replied Antonio with a smile, to this hint, "I have had a suspicion ever since we first met that you are not an ordinary merchant. Come, now, I'll wager that, instead of muslin and calicoes, the goods you wish to smuggle over the border in safety are persons that bear the mark of proscription on their foreheads."

"Mark of proscription," said the count, with some hesitation; "well, be it so—be it so. At all events, the principles you profess, your just cause of resentment against the Austrians, every thing must incline you to succour the victims of that

oppressive government, and to aid me in inflicting a merited chastisement on its most infamous agents."

"I ask no better," cried Antonio, with much heat—"I ask no better; and since it is so, I myself will conduct the expedition, and not a farthing of recompense will I accept for my service."

La Cesia was highly pleased by this declaration; but not wishing to enter into minute details until the moment of execution was come, he contented himself with thanking the chief of the smugglers, and with adding, that the enterprise, although hazardous in appearance, was in reality attended with very little danger.

"Danger," said Antonio carelessly, "we count little of. For myself, I am, I confess, beyond the age when peril is sought as pleasant in itself; but whether it be constitution or habit, I know not, but I am no more sparing of myself than I am of the rest; and, in fact, what is there so very terrible in advancing by a few minutes the fatal term, the arrival at that haven where, as the philosophers tell us, all is finished? It is, were it rightly taken, a service, not a punishment, to disembarrass an indi-

vidual of this sluggish and incommodious burden of life, to which we cling notwithstanding, yet without knowing wherefore. What is forbidden, what is really contrary to natural right, is to cause useless suffering to a sentient being, to treat man as if he were one of the lower animals. So, whenever I strike, I endeavour to make my strokes tell effectually—and I generally succeed pretty well—that is my principle."

"Principle!" said the count, shaking his head, "why, Antonio, with your principle, we should, in the name of humanity, put our fellows to the sword. However, your doctrine is convenient, and it is the chief one: nor is it unjust it should, since in this lower world every thing, if we except mathematical truths, is matter of doubt and uncertainty."

They separated after this conversation, which we have reported only to show to what a lamentable extent the deplorable system of pyrrhonism may vitiate even the purest and most intelligent minds.

The next day La Cesia, having accomplished his object, returned to Como. It was agreed

that Antonio should retain at his instant disposal six determined fellows ready to second his designs, whatever they happened to be. One hundred and fifty napoleons, the one-half payable in advance, and the remainder when the frontier was fairly passed, was the sum agreed on between them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE answer of the Countess Gradiska to the letter of La Cesia was not long in arriving. That friend, as active as she was sincere, was so anxious to gratify the wishes of him whom she called her brother, that she was able to inform him, after but a few days' research, that he might safely take up his abode at Mesnil; a country-seat between Chevreuse and Versailles, whose proprietor was then absent. This proprietor was an old chamberlain of Napoleon, who was at that time travelling abroad from political motives; and the steward of the house, who was an intelligent and a faithful man, had orders to receive the count, and to see to his safe keeping.*

* By one of those fatalities, against which no prudence can sufficiently provide, the chateau of Mesnil became an object of sus-

La Cesia only waited for this assurance, in order to commence the plan he had formed. The moment he received it, he went secretly to Blevio; and establishing himself in a little inn at the entrance of the village, he there sought for information touching the inmates of the Château Varèze. Their position remained unchanged; the marquis still a paralytic, never quitted his bed; and his daughter, whose health was extremely delicate, and who was then far advanced in her pregnancy, very seldom quitted the house, unless to go to church. On the approach of night the count crept out to reconnoitre secretly the environs of the mansion, of which he had been an inmate in times of greater happiness. As the wall of the garden was somewhat high, he got over by means of a ladder; and approaching the building quietly and cautiously, he measured by means of one of those long

picion to the police, in the interval of time that elapsed between the letter of the countess being written and the anticipated arrival of his friend. Happily she had notice of this circumstance, and she instantly sent one of her people to point out a secure place of refuge. That domestic, after vainly seeking for La Cesia on the Fontainbleau road, finished by finding him at "Our Lady of the Rock."

reeds like bamboos, that grow commonly in marshy grounds in Italy, the height of the window-sill of the first floor. He was beginning to try the power of resistance in the door, and to examine the strength of the bolt of the lock, when he saw a light glimmer in the apartment that was occupied by Thomasine, in that part of the palace which looked towards the precipitous hill in the rear, to which in that particular point it was very close. A sudden trembling seized his frame on finding himself so near to one whom he had so devotedly loved, and yielding to an almost involuntary movement, he clambered hastily by the steep footpath, that led up the hill to a kind of terrace, whence he could see whatever was passing in the chamber, the window of which was half open. Thomasine was seated near a table in the attitude of meditation; on a sudden she raised her eyes to heaven, and heaved a deep sigh, while such an expression of sweetness and of pious resignation at the same time beamed in her angel look, as to affect his heart in the most lively manner.

"Such," said he to himself, "was doubtless her look when she prayed for me in that very

place, and such was it when she recalled me to life. No, I will not, I cannot accumulate misery on that victim of filial piety." Resolved to renounce his guilty projects, he was about to remove from the house, when a picture that hung above the bed attracted his eye; and he recognised in it distinctly the odious features of Steinman, who had had his likeness drawn in Austrian uniform. At the sight of that countenance every revengeful feeling sprang up afresh in his wounded breast; in a transport of rage he ran down or rather darted through the brushwood, hurried across the garden, every thought drowned in his desire of revenge and of the means of accomplishing it.

As soon as day began to peep he returned to Como. On arriving there he wrote to Antonio to bring with all possible speed his men from Canobbia, a large village on the north shore of the lake, and immediately opposite to Blevio, where the smugglers had had for a long time an entrepot, and a number of confidants. As they required five or six days before they could reach the rendezvous, the count employed the time that

thus intervened in procuring a couple of rope-ladders, with clamps to secure them, and one of those light arm-chairs that are commonly used in Switzerland instead of sedans, for the purpose of transporting along the mountain-tracks women or men who are not able to bear the fatigue of riding on horseback. Valville was rather uneasy at these preparations, which announced some attempt at abduction. He sought most earnestly to turn the mind of his young friend from such an act, the consequences of which might be fatal to him; not by a representation of the dangers attending it, for he well knew that no consideration of danger would induce him to hold back for a moment; he preferred representing to him the miscalculation in the sum of his enjoyment, which he would not fail to find, even should every thing go on to his mind.

"I see," said he, "you are quite determined on recovering possession of her who has been so unjustly taken away from you. Unquestionably, a man has always a right to take back his own property; and what property more dear and precious than a charming woman, whose virtues

equal her beauty? But, unfortunately, those very virtues oppose an insurmountable obstacle to the happiness which you might otherwise enjoy with her. Then, she is not only married, but she will soon be a mother."

"And that," said La Cesia, with an accent of concentrated rage, "is precisely the reason why I have determined to carry her off."

"I don't understand you," replied Valville, fearing a fresh return of his madness.

"You do not understand me," rejoined La Cesia, in a more calm tone, "because you would submit the effects of a passion that is irresistible to the regulations of reason. Yes, it matters not at what price, I will be revenged. I will be revenged; and in a short time there shall not exist a trace of that monstrous alliance which has been the fruit of baseness and of perfidy."

These words, pronounced with an air of the utmost decision, took from Valville every hope of bringing him back to more moderate sentiments. He therefore made no reply; but he groaned in spirit when he thought of the sorrowful lot which

the inflexible spirit of the count was preparing for him.

Antonio, faithful to his engagements, was exact to the rendezvous pointed out to him, and La Cesia hastened to join him at Canobbia. It was there that they finally arranged the plan which appeared to them most likely to ensure the success of their enterprise. The count's servant, Carl, arrived the same day with the ladders and the arm-chair; and, every thing being ready, at night-fall the expedition, consisting of nine determined individuals, every one of them armed with pistols and poniards, set out in a fishing-boat for Blevio.

The night was dark; there was no moon; and they crept in consequence slowly along the coast, in order to catch the land-wind, when suddenly, on passing a small creek, a man who stood concealed under a wild fig-tree was heard to whistle. At that signal, a boat manned with six men, all of them armed with carabines, and rowed by four stout rowers, advanced rapidly to intercept their progress. When they came within hearing, the

commander of the boat cried aloud to the smugglers—

"Halt, in the name of the emperor and king, or else we shall fire into you."

La Cesia, who by the glimmer of twilight recognised the uniform of the custom-house, rose, and replying for the rest, said in a calm and firm tone—

"Gentlemen, this must be a mistake, which a very little examination will clear up; but in the meanwhile we must pay respect to authority, at all events. We shall therefore allow you to search us cheerfully, and our papers also."

The officers hearing these words of peace, and perceiving no arms in the hands of the speaker nor his companions, approached without distrust; while La Cesia informed Antonio and his friends of what he intended. When the two boats were but a foot or two apart, the smugglers leaped lightly on board the king's vessel, pistol in hand; and the count pressing his to the breast of the leader, cried to him in his turn—"Give up your arms, rascals, or you are all dead men." The attack, which was as unexpected as sudden, completely succeeded. Being attacked when they least

looked for it, and that when they were so closely crowded together, that it was impossible to use their carabines, they had no alternative but to allow themselves to be disarmed. This operation gone through, they were allowed to retire after La Cesia had taken from them three of their oars and their mast, leaving them but one oar; and thus rendering it impossible for them to pursue him.

This rencontre, thanks to the firmness and presence of mind displayed by the count, did not detain them but for a few minutes on their course to Blevio; but the wind dying away, and it being necessary in consequence to have recourse to their oars, it was one o'clock in the morning before the boat was able to reach the little harbour attached to the palace of Varèze. The lights by that time were extinguished; and no sound disturbed the dead silence that reigned around it, but the sound of the dying breeze, as with intermitted puffs it shook the leaves of the trees in the orchard, or the slender tops of the lofty cypresses. La Cesia cautiously landed with his band, and climbing over the wall—a low one—which served as an en-

closure to the garden, he conducted them to the shed where the billets of wood for the use of the family were piled up. On arriving there, every man took a couple of faggots and carried them to the wall of the house, arranging them in a pile under the window of the corridor. When they had done so, however, it was found to be still so high that a great many more would have been required to reach it, and to build them up might have wasted time, which was of all things precious; La Cesia therefore, impatient of such delay, mounted the heap of faggots along with the tallest of the smugglers, and raising himself on the shoulders of the latter, he succeeded in reaching the window. He then cut with his diamond pencil the pane that was opposite to the window-bolt, opened the window, and fixed the rope-ladder which he held in his hand. It was by means of the ladder that Antonio and his people got access to the interior of the house, where they lost not a moment's time in carrying to the garret the billets of wood they had brought from the shed, as well as a few pots of pitch which they had found in the stern sheets of the boat. These combusti-

bles were then lighted, and in a few minutes the frame-work of the roof, which was formed of larch-wood, was in a blaze; the flames began to burst from the sky-lights, and to creep along the roof, whilst a dense smoke spread itself through the whole of the palace. When they had accomplished this feat, they immediately ran down, crying out, fire! The alarmed servants crowded out; and as soon as they appeared in the corridor, they were told by La Cesia, in a tone of command, to go and assist the people employed in extinguishing the burning. Whilst they ran to and fro seeking water, the door of Thomasine's apartment opened; and forgetting her delicate state of health, she was running with headlong steps to the room occupied by her father, exclaiming as she advanced—"Oh! save my father!" when La Cesia stopped her progress.

"Fear nothing," said he, "saved he shall be; I'll answer for his safety with my life." The unexpected sound of his voice, the features of his well-known face dimly seen by the uncertain light of the burning mansion, served but to increase her terror; and her senses giving way to

her alarm, she fell fainting at his feet. To lift her up to place her in the arm-chair they had brought with them, and to hand her over to the two men whom he had retained with him in order to carry her out of the palace, whilst, faithful to his promise pledged to her, he made the old paralytic marquis be conveyed to the bathing-room, whose thick arched roof and isolated position secured it from danger; to do all this was the work of but a minute. The bearers of Thomasine conveyed her, senseless as she was, to the shore, without any one for a moment thinking of opposing the act: this was, in fact, what La Cesia had calculated on, when he thought of setting fire to the palace; whose destruction in that way, it should be observed, from its detached situation, was not like to be accompanied with danger to any other house in the village, at least without giving all due warning.

He had ably calculated that by appearing with his people at that critical minute as the auxiliaries of the household, they would be welcomed without distrust by those even who, in the event of an

open attack, would have been received by them as enemies. This was, besides, the only means of avoiding a contest; for he could not dissemble to himself that Thomasine, far from lending herself to his designs, would oppose to them such a resistance, that he would, in order to succeed, have to carry her off by undisguised force. When he and Antonio were planning their schemes at Canobbia, the latter proposed to take a barrel or two of powder with them, in order to blow up, as they were retiring, one of the wings of the castle; "and thus," said he, "while the confusion of the people round the castle is necessarily augmented by such an accident, we shall secure our retreat in a way that is worthy of old soldiers." But this mode of securing a retreat the count absolutely forbid. He had indeed a decided repugnance to the destruction of life in every shape; less, it must be observed, from any feelings of morality, than from a love natural to all minds of a higher stamp, that never fail to exhibit a lively impress of their celestial origin—a love of creating and of perfecting—which to such

minds bears more of the attributes of power and of genius than destruction or disarrangement.*

The count arrived at the shore at the moment when his men had placed Thomasine in the boat. She was then beginning to recover, and the count, who had not an instant to lose, immediately gave the signal to push off the boat; and already the oars were seized by the rowers for that purpose, when a man came running forward, panting for breath, and calling loudly on the boatmen to take him in, he leaped on board, without waiting for an answer to his demands. He carried a casket under his arm, and the end of a bag of money peeped forth from his pocket; his clothes were in a state of great disorder, and part of his hair was singed: it was Schelme. He had been sent by Steinman, who had just been apprised of his presence in the neighbourhood of Como, to procure some intelligence respecting La Cesia, and had only arrived at Blevio, with a view to make inquiries, the pre-

* This is a very just observation: the appetite for destroying is unquestionably an indication of mental weakness; and if any one be inclined to doubt this, we have only to remind them of the pastimes of their infancy.—*Editor.*

vious night. Being roused by the fire, he had entered into the palace of the marquis, not for the purpose of assisting, but of robbing him; and after plundering the scrutoire of its contents he had sought safety in the shed, where he thought he might securely lurk till morning. He was deceived, however, for the sparks from the burning house being blown towards the shed, set fire to its roof, and the straw blazed up in an instant. He escaped with some difficulty from this new danger, and ran down towards the lake, where the boat accidentally presenting itself to his view, he thought he should easily find shelter there. Scarce, however, had he got on board when the whole of the roof of the palace fell in; and a brilliant stream of light lighting up the whole horizon, he was recognised by Antonio as one of the heads of the police at Como, with whom he had had more than one quarrel.

"This is a valuable prize that fortune has thrown in our way," said he to La Cesia, in an under tone; "this fellow is the principal agent of the director-general, and he is the cunningest rascal that——"

"Wretch!" said La Cesia, interrupting Antonia, and seizing Schelme by the collar, "what do you want here? Where have you procured that bag of money? What are you about to do with it?"

"I saved it from the fire," replied Schelme. "I took it from the palace of the Marquis of Varèze; but it was only for the purpose of handing it over to his son-in-law, M. de Steinman."

The detested sound of Steinman was only wanting to rouse the count to fury. He raised the trembling ruffian in his vigorous hands without more explanation asked or given, and hurling him from him, launched him, as the English say, into eternity in an instant; for the weight of the coin with which his pockets were filled dragged him down to the bottom of the lake as rapidly as if he had had a millstone round his neck. The plunge into its bosom of the heavy and shrieking mass made the water splash up to a great height, as if the pure wave of the lake had been anxious to repel the indignity of being sullied by receiving it.

This act was attended with more important consequences than might have been anticipated

from it; for the death of Schelme was the cause why Steinman was not made acquainted, until several days after, with the details attending the abduction of his wife, which that active and intelligent agent would not have failed to transmit, as well as such indicia as would have enabled him to track the ravisher. In point of fact, the steward of the marquis wrote to him, by order of the latter, that very night; but he merely stated that no one had perished or been hurt; and that Madame de Steinman and Schelme not having made their appearance after the fire, it was concluded for certain that they had been both saved, and had proceeded to join Steinman. On receiving this piece of news, which was as vexatious as it was inexplicable, Steinman repaired in all haste to Blevio; but the marquis had not yet recovered from the alarm that the conflagration had caused, and, besides, he could give no information respecting Thomasine, for whose safety he now entertained the greatest fears. The people of the house knew no more of the matter than their master; but at length he learned from some of the neighbours who had assisted in extinguishing

the fire, that a pretty large boat filled with people had put off from the landing place at the moment the roof fell in, and by the light of the flames that then shot up, they were seen to steer in a northerly direction. In the midst of the researches which he made in every way and in every quarter, the director of the customs found a pocket-book, and brought it to Steinman, which contained some important papers. These seemingly proved that the ravisher of Thomasine had planned carrying her to Spain, the only country where the revolutionary party was triumphant; and it might be collected from some notes in the form of an itinerary, that the parties contemplated embarking at Genoa, as a great number of the insurgent Piedmontese officers had previously done, in order to escape the pursuit of the Sardinian government. Steinman had no difficulty in believing these documents, which did not in any respect violate probability; but they were a mere trick of La Cesia, who wished, for the purpose of gaining time, to mislead his enemy. With this view he had given the pocket-book in question to one of his confidential boatmen, with

directions to carry it to the director of the customs, and to inform him that he had picked it up on the shore of the lake. An agent was immediately sent forward to Genoa, and another to Nice, in the presumed route of the fugitives; and the police of Turin, between which and the police of Milan there existed the best possible understanding, were required to give every assistance and facility to their investigations. Steinman, in fact, had so little doubt of the success of his measures, that he did not deem it necessary to make inquiries in any other direction. It was not till after the return of his emissaries, who had scoured to no purpose the whole of Liguria, that he determined to have Switzerland examined, and thought of sending to the Austrian ambassador in France a description of Thomasine, of La Cesia, and Schelme, which last, he had not a doubt, had been content to betray him; for men who have no honesty in themselves are always ready to suspect others. The Austrian embassy were exceeding zealous in their researches, and they at length succeeded, in conjunction with the Parisian police, in obtaining some traces of the fugitives; and measures were

in consequence taken for their arrest, when the Countess Gradiska, who was informed of their intention by a spy whom she kept in the head-office, parried the blow, by sending express to La Cesia the note, whose delivery we mentioned in the first chapter of our history.

It now only remains, in terminating this first portion of our narrative, to describe the events of his journey up to that time.

On quitting Blevio, La Cesia made the boatman steer in a northerly direction. They had scarcely quitted the shore, when Thomasine recovered the use of her senses, and seeing herself surrounded by men whose countenances were calculated to inspire any thing but confidence, she displayed the strongest symptoms of alarm. The count perceiving her recovery and her distress, immediately approached the terrified lady, and addressing her in a respectful tone, requested her to calm her fears.

"Those persons, madam," said he, "whom you see around you are all my friends; and every one of them, as well as myself, is ready to peril his life in your defence."

"I have no fears for myself," said she, "in an accent of despair; but my dear father, what has become of him?"

"I pledged my word to look to his safety; and had I not been able to redeem my pledge, I should not have presented myself before you."

"I believe you," she answered in a somewhat calmer tone, "but whither, whither are you carrying me?"

"I grieve, Thomasine, that on that point I cannot satisfy you. But listen to me—you have a perfect controul over your feelings, I am too unhappily aware of that fact. Now exercise it in supporting yourself under your present circumstances. Do not allow yourself to sink under the remainder of the trials that fate has in reserve for you. Nothing can possibly save you from them; yet in accomplishing what I have irrevocably determined, I am far from wishing to aggravate your griefs. I might indeed complain," he added, uttering a deep sigh; "I might reproach, but I respect your virtue; and even did I not, your misfortunes would render you sacred in my eyes."

Thomasine was too fully aware of his inflexible character to hope that any entreaty would induce him to change his resolution, and directing to heaven a countenance in which resignation was depictured, she sat still and silent for the remainder of the voyage.

The passage of the lake took up not more than a couple of hours, for it is but narrow in that quarter. The party landed on the north shore at a wild spot behind the gardens of the Villa d'Este, and slowly climbing up the mountain through the brushwood that covers it, they reached at length the cottage of a wood-cutter, situated half way to the top. This man was in the confidence of the count, and with him they halted until the approach of the night, when they again began their march. The smugglers, who were powerful and active men, relieved one another from hour to hour in carrying Thomasine; and so expeditious was their progress, that by next morning they reached the Swiss territory. When they arrived at the first town, the count cordially shook hands with Antonio, and adding a considerable present to the stipulated reward, bid farewell to him and his comrades.

CHAPTER XVI.

La Cesia, who was most anxious to remove to as great a distance, and as speedily as possible, from the pursuit which he had every reason to dread, the lady whom he had carried off, would have preferred proceeding to Paris, where he imagined he would necessarily be more safe than any where else, by the most direct road; but the Countess Gradiska, as the price of that asylum she had procured for him, had demanded that he should pass through Dauphiny. That province ever, since the commencement of the revolution, had sent forth the most zealous partisans of the democratic faction. It will be remembered that, in 1815, Grenoble, the capital town of the province, very narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the insurgents; and so very little progress had royalism made

subsequent to that year, that in the spring of 1821, the very year of which we are now treating, another violent attempt at insurrection had for some time placed the town in a state of siege.

The count was to remain at the mansion of one of the principal actors in the latter conspiracy, who dwelt at a country-seat a few leagues from the frontiers of Savoy, and there he was to collect such information respecting the state of the country as was deemed necessary by the central committee of Paris, previous to coming to any definitive resolution with respect to the period of commencing the grand rising that was then in contemplation.

The travellers, after passing without accident Mount Genevre, turned to the right, and gained by a cross-road very little frequented the ancient Benedictine abbey of Valsombre, which stands in one of those gorges that pierce into the western side of the Alps, and from which the road issues by a narrow defile into the lovely valley of Gresivaudan. Part of this ancient building was in ruins. During the reign of terror, the Band-noire had carried off most of the lead and iron work from the roof;

more recently, the house had been held by a succession of occupants, who found it convenient to pay neither interest nor capital of the purchase-money; and it ended by being sold, in 1810, for a mere song to Colonel St. Gratien. Some repairs had been made in the first few years that succeeded his purchase of it; and that officer, who had been wounded at the battle of Waterloo in the right leg, in such a way as, according to all appearance, would not fail to make him a sufferer for life, retired thither with his family a short time after that event.

Valsombre stands in the midst of woods, and in a wild part of the country. The access to it is difficult, and the entrance to the enclosure does not a little resemble at first sight that of the *Grande Chartreuse*, which is distant from it in a direct line only about four leagues. The pathway that leads to it, and which is shut in on the one side by a perpendicular rock, and on the other by the torrent, is defended by a massive gate, and the end of the wall that joins the porter's lodge is pierced with loop-holes. La Cesia having knocked for admission, was answered by a hoarse and stern voice—

"Who comes? no one can enter here: The colonel is sick, and can see no one but his physician."

In answer to this announcement La Cesia clapped his hands twice, and exclaimed, "The eagles pass every where." On this countersign of the conspiracy being given the barrier was opened, and the porter, an old soldier with grisly mustachios, presenting his firelock as if he had been on guard, saluted the party with a "Welcome, welcome, my comrades!"

When they had got within the gate he whistled to give notice to the people of the house.

An avenue of old lopped yews led them to the apartments formerly set apart for visitors, but which was now the only habitable part of the ancient monastery, and the colonel perceiving the approach of La Cesia from one of the parlour windows, came forth limping to meet him; and when he mentioned his name "Countess Gradiska," said he, "informed us of your intention to visit us, but I was not aware that you were accompanied by a lady. I shall call my wife, and she

will offer to her the honours of our hermitage as she best can."

Colonel St. Gratien was an officer of great distinction. He entered the army as a volunteer in 1792, and had attained the rank he held in the army solely by his merit. It is probable, at the same time, that he would not have risen so rapidly had it not been that, by a fortunate accident, Bonaparte on one important occasion happened to be an eye-witness of his exploits. The emperor was struck by the correctness with which he manœuvred, and his imperturbable coolness in the midst of a murderous fire; and on examining into his principles and opinions, he was informed that St. Gratien was a stranger to politics, that his only study was that of his own business, and that he entertained an admiration that verged on enthusiasm for the military talents of his chief; and lastly, that he was a man of unbounded devotedness to his general, but by no means distinguished for superiority of understanding. It was by such men that Napoleon loved to see himself surrounded: he determined, in consequence, to at-

tach St. Gratien to his person, and he was on the point of nominating him one of his orderlies, when an incident, somewhat singular, made him change his mind.

We have already said that Colonel St. Gratien was married. In the spring of 1800, a short time after the assembling of that army of reserve which, by the single victory of Marengo, conquered the whole of Italy, the company of chasseurs of which he was captain happened to quarter for several weeks at Dijon. St. Gratien was tall and well made, and his features agreeable; he captivated the daughter of his host, a young girl possessed of more vivacity than beauty, but of an irreproachable character, and respectable family; she had, moreover, a dowry of two thousand crowns. The captain of chasseurs, whose only fortune was his sword, thought this was a match by no means despicable; he married her, and he never had occasion to repent of doing so. On quitting his wife for the army he left her at her father's house; and she was still dwelling there in 1804, content with her situation, and even proud of the advancement of her husband, who

had recently been promoted to the rank of major, when the accession of Napoleon to the throne brought with it a swarm of titles; and she heard with mingled surprise and anger that one of her cousins, whose only advantage over her was the possession of a fine face, but whose husband was very high in the confidence of the prince, had just been nominated a lady in waiting to the empress.

A strong desire immediately seized the mind of Madame St. Gratien to occupy a place at court also: envy and ambition have often troubled more enlightened heads. Besides, the lady was one of those who never doubt of their success in any thing on which they fix their wishes, a temperament which is the source of much enjoyment, although it exposes its owner to many disappointments. Nor did she fail to represent to herself the impossibility of the emperor's refusing the request of the wife of an officer whose merit he personally knew. Filled with these hopes she set out for Paris, where her husband was at that time on leave, solicited an audience, obtained it, and preferred her suit in the form of a petition. But Napoleon, it is well known, prided himself on the

formation of a brilliant court. With him beauty in women was the first requisite for admission; and the only exception was a great name. Now poor Madame St. Gratien had been equally ill-treated by nature and fortune in both those respects, and her chances of success were therefore the smallest possible. Without being exactly ugly, she had an insignificant ill-formed figure; her walk was awkward, and her manners vulgar. She was refused, and refused without ceremony, and with disdainful rudeness; a manner which was, by-the-bye, more disagreeable in France, a nation renowned for gallantry all over the world, than elsewhere, and one which the women were never able to pardon in Napoleon.

Confounded and irritated at her reception, Madame St. Gratien complained most bitterly to her husband; who, though he blamed the inconsiderate step she had taken, could not help participating in her discontent, especially when he learned that the vacant situation had been bestowed on the Countess of * * *, whose only recommendation was a name that had figured in former histories.

"It is strange," he exclaimed loudly, "that the head of a government which owes its very existence to the revolution, should thus heap favour on the inveterate enemies of liberty, to the prejudice of the defenders of his country." His complaints were so much the more readily listened to, that in the circle of the principal crown officers, in the senate, in the legislative body, and even in the court, men saw with marked uneasiness the inclination of the emperor for the institutions, and, in consequence, for the men of the ancient *regime*.

It is even asserted that one of the generals most devoted to his person, Marshal Lannes, made in the name of his colleagues some pretty strong representations to the emperor on this subject. The answer to Lannes' remonstrance was, that the system was necessary to his line of policy, because it exhibited to strangers of all parties the spectacle of a perfect union surrounding the throne, which his enemies represented as tottering and unstable; but he did not use arguments merely to appease such of the malcontents as were possessed of formidable influence. Knowing by ex-

perience how greedy the most zealous champions of equality were of distinctions and titles, he was profuse in bestowing them. At the same time the spoils of vanquished nations furnished him with those irresistible arguments, as the most popular of our modern dramatists * terms them, by means of which he easily disarmed opposition and vanquished resistance.

St. Gratien was one of those who experienced the effects of this calculated generosity: the emperor sent him by one of his secretaries an order for sixty thousand francs on the privy purse, with a promise that he should be very speedily raised to the dignity of baron. Madame St. Gratien was present when the message was delivered, and to this part of it she deigned to answer with a smile of satisfaction, although she could not help exclaiming—

"So, I shall be a baroness, then! Well, that is something, certainly; but why not a duchess, and a lady in waiting, like my cousin? We are equals in every thing else, with all respect for the imperial family be it spoken."

* Beaumarchais.

"Madam," said the secretary, with an air of importance, "there is nothing that an officer so distinguished as your husband may not expect from the goodness of his majesty."

The colonel received the order with all gratitude; protested his entire devotion for the emperor; swore his fidelity should be eternal, and kept his word. He was prudent enough at the same time to vest the money thus put into his hands in good securities; and it was with this sum that he purchased the demesne of Valsombre, an acquisition which he most especially preferred on account of its proximity to the village of St. Gratien, where he was born, and from which he had seen fit to assume his title.

Fidelity to political oaths was at one time so common a virtue in France, that it possessed no more value than does gold in Eldorado; but since the revolution it has become more rare, and consequently it has risen in price. St. Gratien possessed that fidèlity and firmness of character in an eminent degree which constitutes a loyal subject; but he fell into a culpable error, and failed in his duty as a citizen, by obstinately persisting

after he had resigned all title to the dignity, in recognising Napoleon as his legitimate sovereign. He was one of the first to join him on his return from Elba; and when the grand plans of his master were irretrievably ruined at Waterloo, he scorned to yield to fortune, or for a moment to give his affections to those princes who brought back that peace which had so long been exiled, and of which France had so pressing need. Not only did he not do so, but, in his anger, he confounded them with the foreigners against whom he had been so long contending; and blinded by his prejudices, he conceived that such sentiments as these were the offspring of the purest patriotism, although at the bottom, that which affected him most deeply was to see all those brilliant prospects his ambition had held out to him for ever vanish by the change of dynasty.

From 1815, St. Gratien had laboured with indefatigable activity to overturn the monarchy of the Bourbons; but as he laboured circumspectly, and with that cunning which ordinarily characterises the people of his native province, he had

hitherto carefully contrived to avoid compromising his safety, even while taking an important part in all the various plots that were almost uninterruptedly hatching in that part of the kingdom.

When La Cesia arrived at Valsombre there happened to be there an agent of the central committee of Paris, who had arrived some days before, charged with the delicate commission of re-establishing harmony among the chiefs of the conspiracy, which had been sadly broken; for though all of them had the same end in view, they were by no means agreed in regard to the mode of attaining it. St. Gratien presented La Cesia to this gentleman, stating at the same time that he was in the intimate confidence of the Countess Gradiska.

"Lady Gradiska!" replied Montagny, which was the travelling name that the ex-conventionalist had assumed; "ah, that is a woman above her sex; one who recalls to my memory by her courage as well as by the extent of her understanding the illustrious Roland! The checks that the sacred cause of liberty has received during

these latter days have so little abated her constancy, that at our assemblies it is ever she who raises our sunken spirits."

"Add," said St. Gratien, "add also, I beg of you, how nobly and generously her conduct contrasts with the miserable selfishness of the wealthy partners of our association. Is it not most revolting that people rolling in riches, who owe every farthing of their fortunes to the emperor, should care so little about the re-establishment of his family, while we poor devils in the country, who never enjoyed as they have done, enormous gifts and large pensions, do not hesitate to sacrifice our all? Here, I for my own share, have laid out five thousand francs during the last three months in the purchase of powder and lead, which has been brought to me from Savoy over the mountains; and had it not been for the remittance that you brought me from the countess I should not have been able to continue the expenditure that is absolutely necessary for the success of the enterprise."

La Cesia interrupted the colonel by asking for some positive information respecting the forces

which the party could raise in the district of Grenoble.

"You shall have them—you shall have them," said St. Gratien; "the accounts are all ready, and I doubt not the committee will be well satisfied with them; but let us begin our conferences after dinner," added he, conducting his guests into the dining-room.

Madame St. Gratien retired from the table when the dessert was served to rejoin Thomasine, who, fatigued with her journey, had requested permission to remain in her room.

After dinner the conversation reverted to the topic the three friends had been discussing.

"I am quite satisfied," said Montagny, "that the public spirit of the province, notwithstanding the indifferent success of our last attempt, is excellent; the whole of our fellows are ready for a start the moment the signal is given."

"I am of the same opinion as you are," said St. Gratien, "but what is the use of those popular movements? They are a mere blaze of straw ending in smoke. Every thing now-a-days depends on the military. Give me a battalion of

five hundred stout, well disciplined fellows, and I'll keep quiet a town of twenty thousand inhabitants. People talk of public opinion, of the will of the nation:—a parcel of fudge! get the bayonets, and then you may laugh at all the rest. The people you say have given in their resignation; it is true, but then the army has taken their place."

"They cannot keep their place," replied Montagny sharply: "principles are opposed to them: no society can possibly exist in which the soldiery are not essentially obedient to the laws."

"Obey!" said St. Gratien, with a smile of contempt, "and whom, forsooth—the rabble? Let us alone; when we are once possessed of power we'll soon set them trotting."

The term rabble stirred up the anger of the demagogue. "What do you mean," said he, "with your disdainful airs? and whom do you call rabble? are they of a different species from yourself, pray? is not your father one of that same rabble? I never heard of the hereditary nobility of your good family, colonel. Sir, this rabble you talk about constitutes the entire of the nation,

with the exception of the military, that is, with the exception of that part of the nation whose intellect is least comprehensive, and whose patriotism is least pure."

"You insult the army," cried St. Gratien, in a rage, and while he spoke he rose from the table and waved his hand menacingly; but Montagny was not a man to be so intimidated. He was small in stature, and sickly in complexion, already advanced in years, and still more broken down by care than by old age; but his air of determination, and his sparkling eyes, announced a man, the energy of whose mind more than compensated for the feebleness of his body.

"Do you think," said he, with a determined voice, and fiercely regarding his adversary, "to alarm me, because you know how to handle a sword, or fire a pistol? Know I have been habituated to danger as well as you, and for as long a period. I have been devoted to the revolutionary cause from its earliest commencement, and I have daily exposed for now thirty years my liberty and my life in its behalf. I have been persecuted and proscribed by tyrants, hunted after by the minions

of police under the government of the emperor and under the government of the Bourbons. With nothing in prospect for years but dungeons, the guillotine, or a ball, a thousand times have I envied the lot of those who, by their station in society, had no fears but the muskets and cannon of the enemy. But a truce to these irritating discussions, colonel, yield yourself to evidence. So true is it that all power emanates from the people, that notwithstanding all your artillery, your great Bonaparte fell to the ground when the people no longer supported him."

"He only fell," replied St. Gratien indignantly, "because he was basely betrayed."

La Cesia now interfered to re-establish a good understanding between the two contending parties, who had so strong an interest in remaining united, and represented to them, that while labouring for the common good by the destruction of the existing government, it was not reasonable to quarrel, beforehand, about what they should do in the event of being successful.—"Your quarrel, gentlemen," said he smiling, "is like the old story of the bear's skin. Recollect the hunt is not yet

done, and that if you do not come to an understanding one with another, it never may."

Every one is aware that an argument presented to a Frenchman in the shape of a piece of pleasantry acquires a sort of calming and sedative virtue, which is wonderfully efficient in appeasing a quarrel. In fact the two conspirators were softening down in friendship again, when the old sergeant, who filled at Valsombre the functions of steward, entered the room, and informed the colonel that one without wished to see him. He immediately left his guests, and in a short time returned with a mercantile traveller, whom he introduced to the company as M. Mancin, a jolly fellow, who traded very extensively in France, and also abroad.

"And a rough job we have," replied Mancin, depositing his cloak, which was dripping with the rain, on one of the chairs, "in such weather as the present. However, when business goes smoothly, we must even console ourselves the best way we can."

In saying this, he drew from his pocket a pattern-book, covered with black leather, and filled

with a great number of patterns of various stuffs, —"I have here," said he, "some nice bargains; will you purchase, gentlemen?"

"Come, truce to your fun," replied St. Gratien; "let us have the correspondence."

The patterns, which were but slightly attached to the leaves of the pocket-book, having been raised up, a hair-pencil, dipped in a chemical composition, was passed over the paper that they covered, and the sympathetic writing with which it was filled became visible.

"Read," said Mancin, when this operation was finished, "here is a copy of a report which the committee of the garrison at Metz has transmitted by orders of the central committee. I am charged to communicate it to you as well as to our friends in Grenoble, in order to give if possible some degree of concert to our labours. I must also let you know that I have just arrived from Munich. I had a commission to Prince Eugene: he was requested to put himself at the head of the insurrectionists, and I had an address for him signed by a great number of officers that had served under his command. I was, moreover, au-

thorised to promise that the castle of Strasburg would declare for him as soon as his arrival at Kehl was known. But for all this, I unfortunately did not succeed in my expedition. The viceroy, though flattered by the marks of esteem displayed towards him by his companions in arms, excuses himself from complying with their desires by his dependence on the king his father-in-law; and besides, his health is feeble, and he has a number of infirmities that have rendered him an old man before his time. All that remains for us now is to write to Sweden."

"Eugene Beauharnais," said Montagny, "would for our purpose be preferable to all others. He is an honourable man, and of a high character for moderation; and besides, his intellect is by no means very bright, nor are his passions strong. If then a general must of necessity head the movement, it is such as he, who offers the surest guarantees to civil and popular power."

"For me," said St. Gratien, "'tis enough to know that he is beloved and esteemed by the soldiery, and that he is the adopted son of Napo-

leon. He is unquestionably the best military tutor that we could give to the King of Rome."

"Before any thing else," observed the stranger that wore the disguise of a traveller, "we ought to resolve that the generalissimo, whoever he may be, shall decide on no important business, in respect of promotion at least, without the advice of a permanent council of war. The army has no intention of submitting again to that arbitrary system that weighed it down under the imperial *regime*, when ranks and honours and favours of every kind were but too frequently granted to intriguers and flatterers. I myself know, that to have served under General Moreau was to have a black cross at one's name."

"Let us begin," said St. Gratien, "as the count judiciously observed, by getting possession of power. Matters will afterwards arrange themselves to general satisfaction. But it gets late, and you reckon on starting to-morrow morning, I suppose. I must therefore show you the curiosities of Valsombre to-night."

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. GRATIEN, preceded by the porter with a lantern (it was then nine o'clock), conducted his guests into a large gothic hall, which is still termed the library of the monastery. The benedictines of Valsombre, who were renowned throughout the world for their laborious researches, had amassed an immense number of precious manuscripts in a handsome case, not unworthy of the magnificent collection it contained. But the Vandals of the reign of terror had sold the books by weight, destroyed the parchments, burnt the cases and the splendid wooden-work, and had left nothing whole but the frame of the edifice, which, though light, was too solid for their attacks. The building had for a long time served as

a granary, until the arrival of the new proprietor converted it into an armoury.

The colonel had a taste or rather a mania for collecting arms and armour of all kinds. Every varied means of destruction, which man in his ingenious malevolence has invented for the purpose of inflicting wounds and death on his fellows, possessed in the eyes of St. Gratien a peculiar charm; and yet he was a feeling-hearted man, and compassionate withal: but the human mind is full of contradictions.

During his various campaigns he had omitted no opportunity of gratifying his inclination for curious or rare arms; and his collection was already considerable, when the invasion of Switzerland, under the directory, procured for him what he deemed a real treasure.

The principal town of one of the petty cantons was carried by storm by the troops that he commanded; and after the affair was over, there was found in the town-house, amongst trophies of Helvetian glory, that had been given up to pillage, a dozen of figures moving by springs, and armed cap-a-pie, such as are yet to be seen in the arsenal

at Soleure. St. Gratien made prisoners of war, without opposition from any one, of those representatives of the companions of William Ide, loaded his baggage-waggon with them, and now by a strange change of fortune they figured in the ancient library of a monastery. Two of these warriors, which were of colossal height, were placed on each side of the door, which they appeared to guard; the remainder were disposed in two lines under the arched windows, each holding a lance in the one hand and a buckler in the other. The shields were without blazoning; but on them the guests might read the name of some one or other of the combats in which the colonel had suffered in his body or limbs; and as a further trophy of his valour, from the vault of the room hung the scarlet and gold scarf of an English officer, whom he had slain with his own hand at the battle of Hondschoote.

When St. Gratien had arrived at the middle of the hall, and looked round on these irresistible testimonies of his prowess with a look of much satisfaction—" Gentlemen," said he, " I have lost my lands in Poland and Westphalia, but I

console myself, when I think on the circumstance, that if I have them not, I yet fought well for them. But," added he, addressing La Cesia, whose eyes were fixed on a bust of the king placed in a niche that had formerly held the figure of St. Benedict, and above which were written in large characters the words

LONG LIVE THE KING!

"I perceive that you are surprised to see the place of honour in my house thus occupied. I shall tell you, first of all, that I owe this homage to the monarch, who on his return to France condescended to give me the cross of St. Louis, which unquestionably I should not have asked from him. But to speak seriously, these demonstrations of royalism are the assured means of destroying the suspicions that might otherwise be entertained against us. The sub-prefect in his tour the other day came to Valsombre, probably with the design of sounding my disposition, and he was so highly edified by the decoration of this hall, that he is to report to the prefect that I am a man of the soundest opinions possible."

"In revolutions," said La Cesia, "dissimulation is allowable, at least so we of the south think, in Spain as well as in Italy."

"You are perfectly in the right," said St. Gratien; "but, at the same time, it is much more agreeable to show ourselves as we really are."

As he pronounced these words he made a sign to the porter, and the latter pressing his foot forcibly on one of the planks of the floor, released the spring of a piece of mechanism somewhat complicated. The two sentinels brought their lances to the rest; and from a recess that was formed on the top of the niche, there came forth an eagle which struck off the crown that was on the head of the king; and lastly, in order to complete the scene, the shield with its tressure of *fleur-de-lis* that was above the "Long live the King" dropped, and displayed the additional words "of Rome."

"These," cried the colonel with a loud voice and a menacing gesture, "these are my genuine sentiments—Long live the King of Rome, and death to the coalitionists! Such are the sentiments of all our companions in arms."

"Speak for yourself, colonel," replied the republican officer drily, "we all wish for a change, but we are by no means all agreed in regard to the new form of government to be established."

"We ought to understand one another then," said St. Gration: then turning to La Cesia, who looked with an eye of contempt on this mummery, "my soldiers are more formidable fellows than you perhaps imagine, count." So saying, he took off the shield of one of the figures, and shewed the whole of the interior filled with bundles of cartridges.

"Here are five hundred rounds: that makes in all six thousand balls for the use of such royalists as may dare to present themselves to us; but I hardly think that many will do so."

Montagny here joined in the conversation.

"You cannot conceive, count," said he, addressing La Cesia, "what an astonishing effect this mass of ammunition, and the whole of this apparatus, which appears to you so childish, produce on the simple inhabitants of our fields. At our last meeting, when they saw the eagle, the

whole *venté* were filled with enthusiasm, and called for arms and the signal to fall on." *

"They shall soon obtain that satisfaction," said St. Gratien, in an animated tone, as he walked out of the room, and conducted his guests to the sleeping apartments that were destined for them.

The inmates had retired for about three quarters of an hour; and La Cesia had not yet lain down on his bed when he heard a low and cautious tap at the door of his room. It was Montagny, who requested a private conversation with him.

"You are called," said he, after he had entered and closed the door, "both by the distinguished rank which you occupy among the Italian patriots as well as by your talents and your connexions, to act an important part in this European conspiracy; and it is therefore most necessary you should know exactly the state of the country which is at present the principal focus of it. But I must

* It is said that the term *venté*, which was borrowed from the Carbonari, is now adopted by conspirators in all countries, to designate those meetings that are held for the purpose of planning the overturn of their respective governments.

first of all let you know that you would form a very unsound judgment were you to listen to the assertions of Colonel St. Gratien. He talks as if, when we were once rid of the yoke of the Bourbons, we should be again placed under the still heavier yoke of the military. This is indeed his wish, and the wish of a great number of officers; but this the nation will not permit; and we shall see to that carefully. In a few words, here is the condition of France. The priests and the nobles have lost their influence for ever; the revolution has done justice upon them, at all events. At present all the power and all the strength are in the hands of the middle classes, because in their hands are deposited both the intelligence and capital of the state. As to the common people of the towns, who are ignorant and rude, the necessity of daily labour will eternally keep them in dependance, as much as it does the poor peasants, who are bent down to the earth, and who rank in the social order of things no higher than the serfs from whom they spring. Cruel experience has shown the vice of the system of equality when it goes down to the lowest classes. After,

therefore, we have pulled down the great, it is our wish to rule over the small."

"I understand," said the count, with a slight smile of irony; "in order to ensure your own freedom, you intend to constitute yourselves masters of all the rest."

"If we wish to be masters," replied the revolutionist warmly, "it is for the general good that we wish to be so."

"It is even thus," replied La Cesia, "that crowned despots talk. They are the fathers of their people, and have no wish but for the good of their children. But go on: can you tell me what are your means of overturning the state, and what form of government you purpose to establish for the maintenance of your trading aristocracy?"

"Our means are immense, and our success is certain. In the first place, all the separate corps of the army, to begin with the guards, for instance, are with us."

"Are you quite sure of that? We were told exactly the same story in Piedmont; and the event proved that the military establishment of the king thought more of their oaths than of the

cause of the nation. And among the French, the facility with which your government suppressed the grand conspiracy of the month of August last year, indicates a disposition somewhat similar in your guards also."

"The measures of that period were ill taken; they will be better looked to this time. We are specially occupied in gaining over the inferior officers, who being in contact with the soldiers, exercise an exclusive influence over them. The school of Saumur, where they are assembled in great numbers, affords us great facilities; and were I to show you our correspondence, you would see that we have only to give the word, and the tricoloured flag will be hoisted on the turrets of that castle, which by its position on the Loire is one of great importance.* But it is much better the movement should be simultaneous; and when in every garrison the tricoloured cockade shall at one and the same instant take the place of the white, the disheartened and disunited royalists will

* In fact, a dangerous conspiracy in the school of Saumur was discovered at the very moment it was about to burst forth, on the 23rd of December of that very year 1821.

make no more resistance than they did on the famous 20th of March. But although the success of the insurrection is certain, it is not the less necessary to look to its consequences. Public opinion, I regret to confess it, is by no means so unanimous as it ought to be in respect of principles. The mixed forms of constitutional monarchies have seduced a multitude of timid and low minds. Even among those who despise the theory of legitimacy, there are enow of pusillanimous souls who would prefer that species of accommodation to a plain absolute republic, the only government that nature and reason sanction. They appeal for proof of their doctrines to the example of Great Britain, whose power and riches so dazzle all eyes; nor will they see that it owes its astonishing prosperity to the republican part of its institutions, and that its prosperity would have been much greater and more speedily attained had its progress not been trammelled by royalty. But no; either from motives of interest or from sheer folly, people will go on crying up, as a sublime conception, the hereditary peerage, that point at which all ambitious men aim, that sweet sine-

cure for all that are invested with it, and proclaiming the existence of two chambers as quite indispensable for cementing the difficult alliance between order and liberty! Although, however, such wretched sophists may have their dupes, they will not shake the political creed of honest and enlightened men. We, the patriots of eighty-nine and the republicans of ninety-three—we, who have shown our contempt alike for the greedy noblesse of the court of the Bourbons, and the vulgar parasites of the more sumptuous banquet of Napoleon, we shall repel with all our energy and power such insidious inventions of cupidity and tyranny."

"These sentiments," said the count, with an air of approval, "are worthy of a free and lofty spirit; but in this corrupted age, the party of the disinterested is but a small one."

"Boldness and strength of character," replied Montagny, who grew gradually animated as he proceeded, "supply the want of numbers; and it is from that cause that the minority have in all ages governed the world. Only call to mind the convention! How despotically did it reign over France, who yet held it in abhorrence! It

would have reigned yet had it not been infected with that weakness which, under the name of moderation, destroyed it. We, who have attained to power after so many tribulations and so much labour, will not fall into a similar error. Rigour inexorable shall be our guarantee for the submission of others. Kings may seek for the love of their subjects, their acts stand in need of it, but the heads of a republican government!—they ought to be as inflexible as the laws which they administer, and of which fear is the only attribute. Nothing is required to instil this fear into soldiers, as well as citizens, but strength of resolution. When I was deputy of the people with the army of the Sambre and Meuse, all that I had to do, in order to make both brave men and brave officers humble, was to hold up to their eyes the figure of the guillotine that was graven on my signet-ring."

"Our plan," he went on, "is completely arranged. Republican officers are appointed to head the several bands of the insurgents. We shall begin by displacing the royalists; but our process of depuration will not stop there, it will extend to the Bonapartists also. Whoever is

willing that any one man should lord it over the rest, be his name Louis, be it Napoleon, is unworthy to have the command of Frenchmen. St. Gratien himself, whatever be the services he has rendered to the cause, if he persist in his fanatical and servile attachment to the imperial dynasty, shall remain at Valsombre, and employ his time in manœuvring his puppets. But Marcin, who is an old aide-de-camp of Moreau, and a man of tried patriotism, shall be chief of the guard of government."

"You have not yet told me what form of government you intended to adopt."

"After a great many discussions, the supreme secret junta have determined to reject all constitutions that experience has not sanctioned: and we have at length fixed on adopting the fundamental institutions of that celebrated republic to which they assured no less than twelve centuries of glorious existence. We shall have, then, as the people of Venice had, a grand council, which will deliberate with closed doors; an executive committee of ten, and three censors of state, who will have the power of life and death. We shall thus

combine mystery and terror, the grand elements of human government in all ages and in all countries."

"I am not by any means certain," replied La Cesia, "that the French character would bear so harsh a system. At any rate your plans appear to me to be defective in their foundation. Where are you to procure in France the materials that gave power and life to the republics of Italy? Do you not know that the Venetian nobles, and the same observation holds true of the Genoese nobles, powerful in their wealth and illustrious in their traditions, paid for the supreme power with which they were invested by their fortunes and by their personal liberty? that they were ever ready to defend the state which they governed, and that too at their own expense? Take my word for it, your manufacturers will not easily be induced to make such a fool's bargain. Consult history, sir, and you will there find that the patrician order alone, the hereditary nobility, has ever been found capable of such elevation of mind. In a democracy civil virtues are rare and individual; while in an aristocracy well constituted the general

feeling of the whole body silences all selfish feelings, and patriotic devotion is converted into a point of honour."

"You are a noble, count," said Montagny, with one of those derisive smiles that never fail to accompany that kind of argument which the schoolmen term the *ad hominem*, and which can at all times be so conveniently substituted for logical reasoning.

"I am so," replied La Cesia, with dignity; "and I have assumed as my device the maxim of one of your writers on that point—NOBILITY IMPOSES OBLIGATIONS.

"But to return to your projects. Do you think that it would be prudent to attempt a revolution in France at a moment when all the rest of Europe is still under the yoke? Is it not evident that, at the first news of the insurrection, the sovereigns around would in their alarm unite their forces for the purpose of establishing among you what they call order? And how, in your disunited state, could you resist them? Trust me, every thing is to be hoped from a little delay; every day brings new proselytes to our cause. Even in the here-

ditary domains of Austria, which despotism has hitherto looked on as her unapproachable stronghold, in Moravia and in Hungaria the peasants are rising against their lords, and claiming their natural rights. In the north of Germany, in the mean time, that classic land of enthusiasm and secret societies, there is now springing up, and every moment increasing in power and numbers, an association that will soon become formidable—I mean the *Arminia*. That society coming forth under the auspicious name of the avenging hero of Germany, and founded on the Tugen-bund of the universities, has even now pushed its affiliated branches into the heart of Poland and Lithuania. It is upon those noble and unfortunate Sarmatians who have lost their independence, but have never been debased, that the friends of freedom henceforth found their dearest hopes. They exercise, in fact, over their conquerors the Russians the influence of superior civilisation and intelligence; an influence which is irresistible when aided by conformity of language and manners. It is from this influence that, in the extreme east of Asia, the Mantchou Tartars

have become the subjects of those Chinese whom they conquered. The grand work of Russian regeneration is more advanced than is generally imagined. The secret societies reckon among their members all the select bands of the army; and the movements that have been manifested in one of the regiments of the guards, though premature, is a sure indication of this. The progress of the general conspiracy would have been much more rapid had it not been for the attachment of the troops to the person of Alexander, whose humanity and generous sentiments do indeed merit every attachment and respect. But his health is completely broken, and his end is fast approaching. He dies without children, and his mighty inheritance will doubtless be contested. Now every thing has been prepared for the subversion of the throne of the Muscovite autocrats by a military insurrection, as soon as the contest is fairly begun. The consequence of such an event will be immensely important; for it is in such a case only that the government can enjoy its independence and consolidate its liberty in security."

Montagny, who had heard the count with the impatience natural to a Frenchman, here inter-

rupted his further harangue. "Your reasonings," said he, "are not without plausibility; but we are the slaves of circumstances, and if we neglect our opportunity the chances may turn against us. Louis XVIII. is dying down daily. He is playing the part of a king as long as he can, and dissembling his weakness and keeping up his ordinary habits; but nature betrays him. He has often been seen returning from his drive with his head resting on his breast, and plunged in a lethargic sleep. Moreover, the reports of the interior of the palace inform us that his prodigious memory is gradually growing feeble. He is no longer capable now, as he once was, to announce at once the day of the week corresponding to an immense number of events occurring in a great number of years. His doctors say he has the gout, and that for two years past there have been symptoms of paralysis in the lower limbs, but that now it has a tendency to the head, and cannot be relied on for a moment."

"You wish to be ready for the event?"

"We wish to anticipate it. We shall make a much better bargain of it with a feeble and dying king, than with a prince full of vigour and health

who is to succeed him. If we let him be installed quietly on the throne of his ancestors, he will probably maintain himself there; he will promise to observe the new institutions, the charter, forsooth, of which France is so proud; he will be credited; his honour is above suspicion, and his affability of manners will gain all hearts. But that is not all. The fatality that pursues us does not leave us even the chances of futurity, for there can be no doubt that his son will pursue the same course. In fact, instead of licentiousness of manners and the disorders common to courts, the whole of the family gives one uniform example: princes and princesses are models of virtue and beneficence. You cannot imagine what mischief this produces, especially in the capital."

"The poor whom they succour," said La Cesia, smiling at this bit of revolutionary simplicity, "are not of your opinion, I rather suppose."

"We have nothing to do with individuals," replied the old jacobin in an angry tone. "Perish the poor and the sick also, provided we succeed in founding the happiness of the species on a basis recognised by principle. A generation has no value in my eyes: I again repeat, the species is

all I care for. But the night is far advanced, it is now time to retire to bed. You are going to Paris, and you will there judge for yourself of the situation of our affairs. I shall soon join you. In the mean time, here is a letter for my brother-in-law, Colinet, the barrister; he is a man of wit and talent, and will take pleasure in giving you every information of which you stand in need. He is initiated into all our secrets, and reckons among his friends the most illustrious members of both chambers. He is an ardent friend of liberty; and, in fact, we differ but on one point, although I confess that is an essential one. He was born at Rennes, and, like many of his fellow-countrymen, he was a Breton before he knew what it was to be a Frenchman; and therefore he aims at a federative government. That system, which carries us back to the times of the Girondins, has, unfortunately, a great many abettors, especially in the distant departments, which are jealous of the supremacy of the capital. We shall have a great deal of difficulty to make them listen to reason. But, as you have wisely said, let us begin by getting the power, and then we shall see what can be done."

In finishing these words he handed the count

the letter, shut the door gently, and retired without noise.

La Cesia, when left alone, could not help reflecting deeply on all he had seen and heard at Valsombre. He was now convinced that, in the very precarious condition in which France was placed, the party that was favoured by the army would unquestionably gain the victory; and as it seemed generally allowed that the army was averse from the Bourbons, the Bourbons must of course fall. But what was to be the result of the grand catastrophe? Looking to the bad understanding that reigned among those of the liberal party, there was nothing in prospect but confusion and anarchy. It was made up of a number of heterogeneous elements, whose force were very nearly balanced of republicans, Bonapartists, constitutionalists, federalists. Among men whose opinions were so opposite, and who were so fanatically violent, what was to be expected but the most sanguinary struggles, during which the neighbouring powers, as they had done before, would not fail to interpose? La Cesia, indeed, had not the slightest doubt that all the ills that civil war brings in its train would soon fall on that unhappy

country. He was a friend to freedom, but he was generous in his friendship; and he regretted, with such a prospect before him, that engagements of honour should have connected him with this most inauspicious enterprise. "Why did not I accept," said he to himself, "the offers of Lord Byron? Why am I not now in the Peloponnesus? There at least I should have known who were the oppressors, who the oppressed; and combatting there, I should have had the assurance that I served a noble cause, that I was defending the rights of humanity."

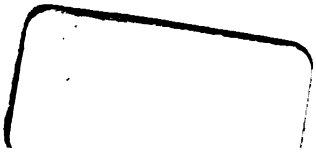
These late reflections were sad and discouraging; and he sought in vain to withdraw his mind from them, until at length sleep came to remove him from sorrow that was remediless. Next morning he took leave of St. Gratien, who gave him his dispatches for the committee at Paris.

On quitting Valsombre, La Cesia left Lyons on his left, and traversed Burgundy by slow journeys, out of consideration for the condition of Thomasine; and thus proceeding, they reached Fontainbleau without accident. They there hired a cabriolet, in order to reach by a cross road the castle of Mesnil, where the Countess Gra-

diska had secured an asylum for them; but if, as is truly the case, the great roads in France are in a shameful state of dis-repair, the cross roads, especially in winter, are all but impassable. Being obliged to proceed at little more than a walking pace, the night surprised them when they were yet more than a league from their place of destination. Their guide lost his way, and the horse floundered into a quagmire; the shock was so great that Thomasine, who was within two months of her *accouchement*, was seriously injured by it. It was found impossible, in consequence, to advance farther; and, happily, there was no call for it, as the accident took place within one hundred yards of "Our Lady of the Rock." La Cesia requested the rites of hospitality from the farmer's wife; the rest is known to our readers. We have nothing to add to what has been already told, unless it be to state the changes which so many events had produced in the reciprocal dispositions of two beings formerly so loving.

Madame de Steinman was afflicted to the very bottom of her heart; but confident of the strength of her own virtue, and relying without fear on the count's honour, she remained calm and resigned.

The count, on the contrary, a prey to habitual melancholy, his mind disturbed with contending emotions, passed his days in the alternations of listlessness and the most violent agitation. His project, bold as it was to rashness, even now completely succeeded; and he triumphed in his pride of heart when he contemplated the despair and humiliation of his enemy. But scarcely had he drank deep of the cup of revenge when his lips loathed its bitterness. The presence of Thomasine was a source at once of pleasure and of pain. In the indefinable sentiment that he experienced when he approached her, there mingled the recollections of good for ever lost, the gnawing pang of regret inextinguishable. He still admired the form and face that once enchanted him; but though alive to the charms of her beauty, as well as of her celestial mind, he no longer burnt for the possession of either. Thomasine was now to his eye a temple—lovely indeed, but deserted; where the altar was cast down, and from which the presiding divinity had departed.

THE END.

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